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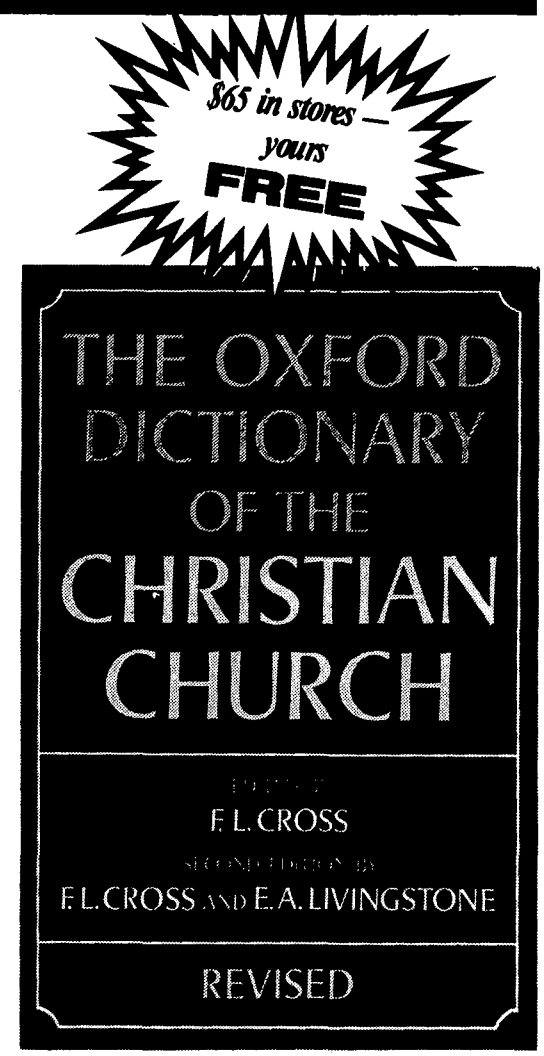

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What are the facts?

■ The concept of "land for peace" is a totally new one in the history of the world. It was formulated for one specific purpose only, namely to persuade and pressure Israel to give up territories that it has administered since the Six-Day War of 1967. By its victory in that war, Israel wound up in possession of these territories. Contrary to what many are led to believe, the "West Bank," the focus of today's attention, had never been part of any Arab country. It was part of Palestine, a territorial unit that, by the Mandate of the League of Nations and in line with the Balfour Declaration, had been designated as a national home for the Jewish people.

■ Thus, while the concept of "land for peace" is a brand-new one, the concept that to the victor belong the spoils is as old as history itself and had really never been questioned before the days of the Israel-Arab conflict. Our own country, of course, following its Manifest Destiny, has benefited greatly and has consolidated its territory by applying this motto. But Israel followed a different path. From the day of victory in 1967, it waited for an offer of peace from the Arabs. But that offer never came. Instead, immediately following the war, the Arabs pronounced their three unalterable "no's:" no recognition, no negotiation, and no peace with Israel.

■ In 1977, President Sadat of Egypt traveled to Jerusalem and presented a peace plan to the Israeli government. The Israelis eagerly embraced his suggestion. In exchange for peace and normalization of relations with its neighbor, Israel returned to Egypt the vast Sinai peninsula, together with the city of Yamit; some of the most advanced military installations in the world; the port and naval installations of Sharm-el-Sheik, which safeguard Israel's access to its port of Eilat; and the oil fields that Israel had developed and which had made Israel self-sufficient in its energy requirements. And, of course, Israel also gave up the natural buffer against aggression that the Suez Canal and the strategic depth of the Sinai itself provided. It was a first in history. Never before in the chronicle of mankind had the victor returned conquered territory to the vanquished in order to attain peace.

■ One would expect that the concept of "land for peace" would work both ways. After all, should not the Arabs also make some territorial sacrifices for peace? Unfortunately, that is not the case. Every inch of land held by the Arabs is considered "holy Arab soil" and its possession by the "infidels" (Christians or Jews) is inadmissible, intolerable, a blasphemy and a case for "jihad" (holy war). No compromise, no concession is ever possible. The way the "Taba issue" was finally resolved further illustrates the Arab belief that the "land for peace" principle is basically a one-way street.

■ The "land for peace" formulation is now applied mostly to the Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza regions. Israel's foes, but also some of its friends, urge Israel to yield these regions to the Arabs, in exchange for "peace." But there is no peace, and no peace will come about by Israel's giving up this area of vital strategic importance to those who are its sworn enemies and who have declared over and over again that they wish to use this land as their launching pad for the final attempt at the destruction of Israel. The conflict in the area is not only between Israel and the "Palestinians." It is first of all between Israel and the Arab nations. With the single exception of Egypt, virtually all of them are still in a state of war with Israel.

To none of the Arab countries has the possibility ever occurred of *their* trading land for peace, for instance yielding the "West Bank" to Israel for the sake of peace. Not one of these countries has even hinted that they would make peace with Israel if Israel yielded the administered territories to the Arabs. There isn't even a gesture of accommodation, such as a lifting of the over 40-year-old Arab economic boycott against Israel, an apology for the odious slander that Zionism is Racism, or a discontinuation of the yearly charade in the United Nations, in which the Arab states attempt to expel Israel from that body. For the victor to yield land for peace to the vanquished is a new idea—who knows, it might even be a good one. But it surely would have to work both ways in order to be valid and effective.

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C O N T E N T S

Poor Peru ..... William Rosenau 16
Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley is the coca-growing capital of the world. It is also home to a uniquely violent Maoist insurgency. And those are the least of the country's problems.

A House of Ghosts ..... Micah Morrison 19
Even if Saddam Hussein fails to get his way, Kuwait as it existed before August 2 is lost forever. Widespread torture and executions have sent as much as two-thirds of its population fleeing abroad, and a disorganized resistance leaves Saddam some interesting options.

Violinistas ..... Lauren Weiner 21
What happens when Violeteros play politics with Sandinistas.

Keeping the Faith ..... Matthew Scully 22
Danny Ortega goes to church.

Books for Christmas 24
TAS*'s annual Holiday gift suggestions from distinguished readers and writers.*

DEPARTMENTS

The Continuing Crisis 10
Correspondence 11
Editorials/Newt the Whaler/Chairman of the Board ..... R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. 12
Capitol Ideas/Smoke, Mirrors, and the Adversary Press ..... Tom Bethell 13
Spectator's Journal/Paz in Our Time ..... Stephen A. Schwartz 32
The Public Policy/Our Kingdom for a Deal ..... Dick Armey 34
Presswatch/An American Originalist ..... Terry Eastland 36
Eminentoes/The Saga of Crazy Earl ..... Victor Gold 38
Soviet Presswatch/Surrender the Pink ..... Cathy Young 40
Among the Intellectualoids/Bad Time for Gonzo ..... Rick Marin 42
The Talkies/Reeling in the Years ..... James Bowman 43
The California Spectator/Land of the Smiling Sun ..... Richard Brookhiser 56
Current Wisdom ..... Assorted Jackasses 58

BOOK REVIEWS

The Mother Tongue, by Bill Bryson ..... John Simon 45
Agents of Influence, by Pat Choate ..... David Brock 48
Now You Know, by Kitty Dukakis with Jane Scovell ..... Joe Queenan 50
What Are People For?, by Wendell Berry ..... D. G. Myers 51
The Search for Modern China, by Jonathan Spence ..... Susan Ruel 52
Rudeness and Civility, by John F. Kasson ..... Francis X. Rocca 53

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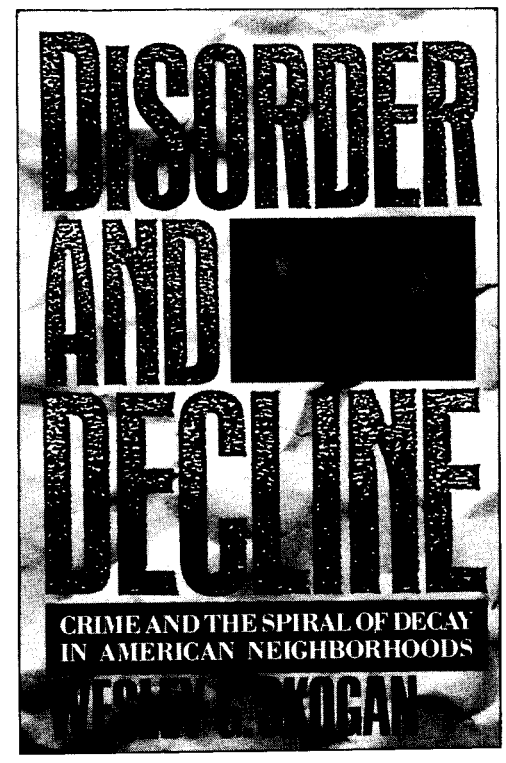

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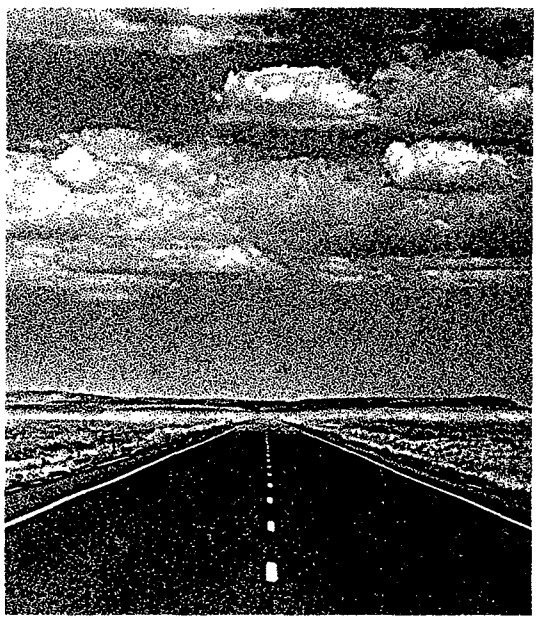

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You've heard about those crazy damages suits, those huge awards, the insurance rates crunch. Well, it's an ill liability crisis that blows no one any good—$10 billion a year's worth.
The plaintiff attorneys' great honey rush
By Peter Brimelow and Leslie Spencer
And their boodle is growing rapidly. The top moneymakers on FORBES' list typically said that they've been hitting the big numbers only for the last decade.
Unlike Wall Streeters, plaintiff attorneys don't have to worry about the stock market's swings. They mostly didn't bother with high-priced Ivy League law schools—in fact, they often say they didn't learn a thing about practicing law in law school." Walter Umphrey (see list) even told FORBES that he had trouble graduating from Southern Methodist University, which he attended on a football scholarship, because of "a deficiency in English." But he has no deficiency in income: $14.5 million in 1988.
Why has a single, relatively obscure corner of U.S. legal practice created so many million dollar incomes?
It's a fearful concatenation of circumstances, to quote a famous early American trial lawyer, Daniel Webster. In one of those institutional accidents that occasionally happen in a structured but dynamic society, the checks and balances that normally restrain an organized interest group have failed, creating an opportunity to hold the rest of the economy to ransom. Other recent examples: stockbrokers in the 1960s, who were able to make institutional investors pay full commission rates because stock exchange rules forbade volume discounts; airline pilots in the 1970s, whose powerful unions created atmospheric salaries out of an industry stratosphere by regulation.
How has this happened?
The essential mechanism is simple. Two distinctively American phenomena have intersected: the contingent fee system and the "liability crisis," the explosion of litigation and awards that has occurred during the last 30 years in the previously sleepy area of tort law—the law of accidents and personal injury. Both have been historically unknown in other common-law jurisdictions, such as Britain. And plaintiff attorneys there are a lot poorer.
A startlingly large part of the recent massive damages awards goes to the lawyers. Plaintiff attorneys commonly
"We are freedom fighters. We all consider ourselves social engineers. We are crusaders of good. Some of us do it for the money, what we are paid is coincidental."—That's Ned Good speaking, Pasadena plaintiff attorney, member of the Inner Circle and on FORBES' list of the highest-earning attorneys in the nation. Good was reluctant to discuss how much money he coincidentally makes in the course of his crusade, but FORBES estimates it's almost certainly more than $3.5 million a year.
Roll over, Wall Street. Meet the real champions of the great American greed game: the plaintiff attorneys—lawyers who specialize in suing.
Top moneymaker in 1988, according to FORBES' count (p. 384), was Houston's Joe Jamail. He made most of his $450 million—our conservative estimate; it could be as high as $600 million—by inducing Texas courts to accept the questionable theory that Pennzoil had a binding contract to buy Getty Oil even though there was nothing on paper. His victim, Texaco, the country's third-largest oil company, was forced into bankruptcy. But Jamail received only a fraction of the publicity Mike Milken got for the $550 million he made with Drexel Burnham back in 1987.
Jamail is merely the most spectacular example to date of a powerful emerging trend. The 62 other plaintiff attorneys on FORBES' list all made above $2 million in both 1987 and 1988. And FORBES has identified at least 15 more $2-million-a-year plus suspects, with another 50 in the $1-million-to-$2-million range. Then there are the other 53,000 plaintiff attorney members of the Washington, D.C.-based Association of Trial Lawyers of America (despite its name a plaintiff attorneys' lobby. Defense lawyers are eligible only for nonvoting membership). Given the windfall nature of the attack-lawyer business, any of them might strike it rich with a single case.
One measure of the money flowing to plaintiff attorneys: Yeshiva University's Cardozo School of Law Professor Lester Brickman estimates that their total income from contingent fees—their share of the settlement, apart from their expenses—"exceeds $10 billion."
OCTOBER 16, 1989
FORBES, OCTOBER 16, 1989

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First the guts. Then the glory.

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The judges chose the cover story of our October 16 issue, "The Litigation Scandal." In it, Peter Brimelow and Leslie Spencer exposed the enormous greed of trial lawyers, judges and legislators. A greed which costs Americans roughly $80 billion a year in higher insurance bills and court costs. That the story hit home is evident by the many letters and phone calls the reporters still get from angry lawyers and victimized clients. And, of course, by the decision of the highly respected Loeb Award judges.

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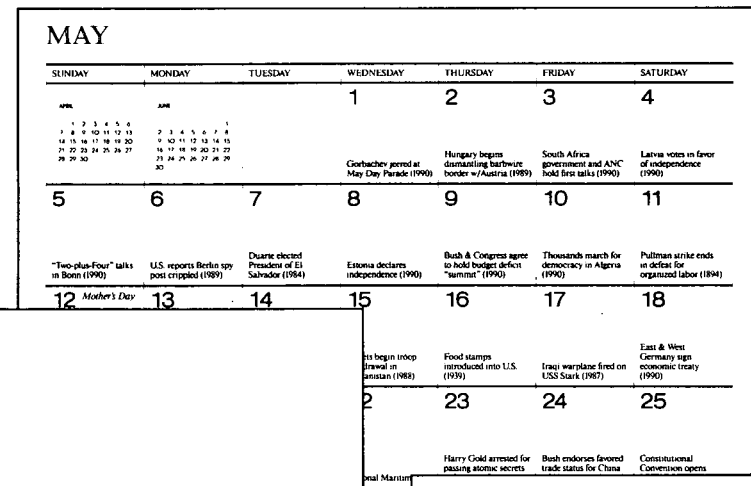

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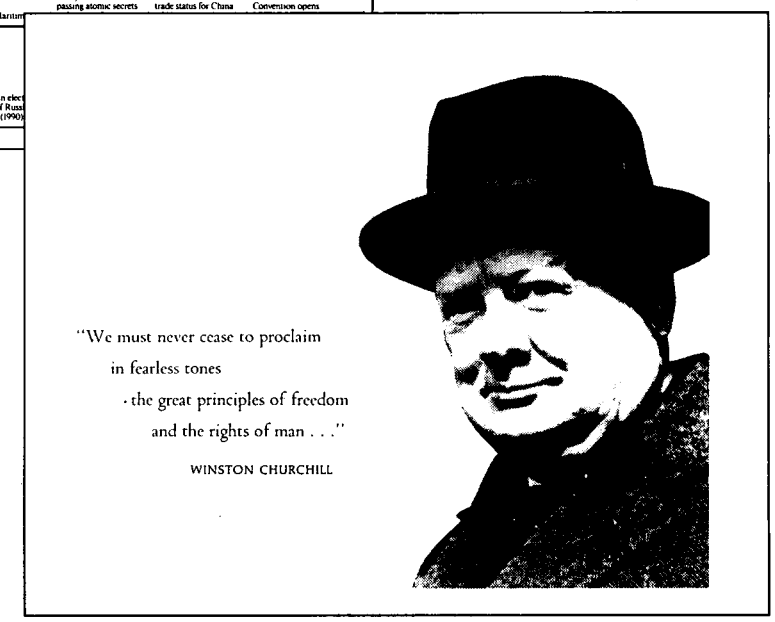
William F. Buckley, Jr.

"The march of freedom
and democracy
will leave Marxism-Leninism
on the ash-heap of history . . . "

Ronald Reagan
June 1982



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in fearless tones
the great principles of freedom
and the rights of man . . ."

WINSTON CHURCHILL

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• Two years ago, many conservatives were wondering what kind of president George Bush would make. One favored scenario had him playing Harry Truman to Ronald Reagan's FDR: a consolidator of the revolution his predecessor had set off. Dream on. By the end of October 1990, the Bush presidency having crashed like a junk-bloated stock market, well-wishers were left comparing Mr. Bush to the beleaguered Harry Truman of 1946, counting on a miracle comeback two years down the road. That will take some doing, now that Mr. Bush has clinched the role of Thomas Dewey.

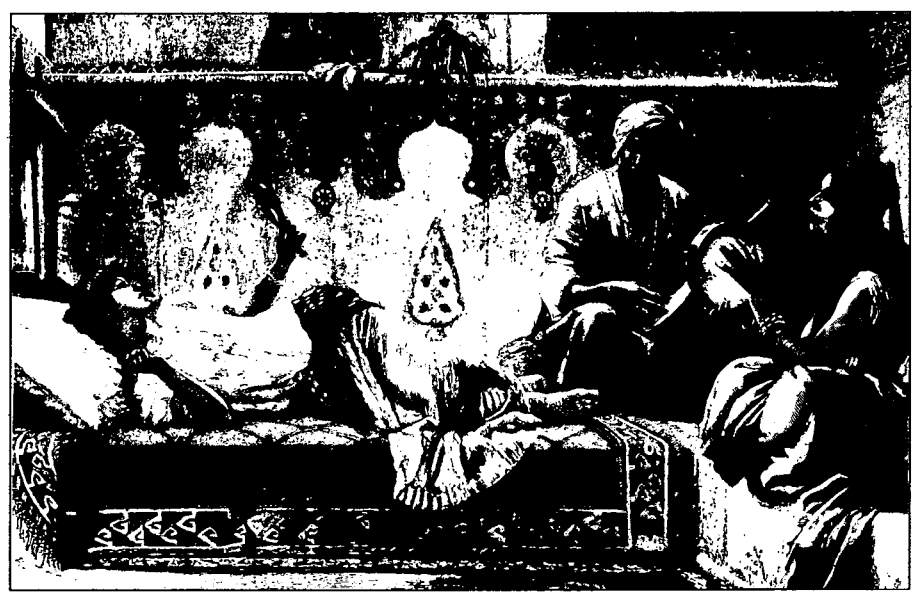
• After giving away the store, supermarket, and shopping mall to Democrats and forcing Republicans to shun his presence in their election campaigns, Mr. Bush found solace in foreign affairs, particularly in his dealings with newly crowned Nobel laureate Mikhail Gorbachev, whom he praised as "a courageous force for peaceful change in the world." It appears Mr. Bush is no more in touch with the Soviet man in the street than he is with the average Americano. "I don't know why they are giving it to him," said Oleg, a Moscow repairman, on learning of the peace prize awarded Mr. Gorbachev. "The West sees him as a friend and a fighter for peace, but to us he's only hot air." Mr. John Sununu would no doubt tell Oleg to count his blessings. After all, he'll be needing that hot air once the Russian winter sets in.

• Just in time for a Middle East showdown, U.S. Armed Forces radio and television participated in an international broadcast of the ultimate peace song, Mr. John Lennon's "Imagine," on what would have been the artist's fiftieth birthday. The unusually sophisticated lyrics continue to impress. "Imagine there's no countries./It isn't hard to do./Nothing to kill or die for./No religion too." Alas, the song wasn't heard in Ekaterinburg, Russia, where a Russian Orthodox church will be built at the site where Czar Nicholas II and his family were butchered by progressive forces in July 1918, nor in the country of Hungary, where the body of the sainted anti-Communist Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty will be reburied in May. In other musical news, tickets to Mr. Bruce Springsteen's first formal concert in two years sold out in forty-five minutes in Los Angeles. Proceeds from the November 16 show will go to the Christic Institute, which even the *Nation* keeps at a distance. Mr. Bob Dylan performed to a standing ovation at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Hall of the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York, and Miss Madonna released her latest public-service video in which she waves the Stars and Stripes as part of the "recording industry's" efforts to encourage 18-to-24-year-olds to vote against censorship in this year's elections. Among the reprintable lyrics: "Abe Lincoln, Jefferson Tom,/They didn't need the atomic bomb./We need beauty, we need art,/We need government with a heart."

• At least it can be said that a growing number of candidates did show heart in this year's campaign. In Casper, Wyoming, Republican gubernatorial candidate Mary Mead apologized for the "boring" speech she made to the Wyoming Association of County Officials, and in Missoula, Montana, state legislator Bob Ream interrupted a door-to-door campaign swing to climb through a window with a garden hose to help put out a house fire. The heart works in mysterious ways, though, especially in Brazil, where Justice Minister Bernardo Cabral was hounded from office for carrying on with Economy Minister Zelia Cardoso de Mello, and where Gilberto Mestrinho, running for governor in Amazonas state, was said to be the father of nine children by four lucky women. "Vote for Mestrinho," his opponents proclaimed. "He could be your father." Sure enough, Mr. Mestrinho won by a wide margin on October 3.

• In Teramo, Italy, a 35-year-old truck-driver, whose name has been withheld, chose an exclusive brothel as his rest stop one recent evening, and "when he finally obtained the prohibited meeting," *La Stampa* reports, "the woman he dreamed of . . . turned out to be his wife." After she tried to run away, the husband caught her and beat her, according to charges filed by the wife-mistress, whose name has also been withheld. Perhaps she should take her business to Moscow, where Miss Yevgenia Debryanskaya, a member of the new Libertarian party, operates in a much freer atmosphere as evidenced by the near riot she caused a block from the Kremlin when she tossed choice American condoms at passers-by and demanded that prostitution be legalized—this before Jane Fonda's triumphal jog around Red Square.

• Higher education suffered further setbacks when striking Temple University professors agreed to return to classrooms on the overcrowded Philadelphia campus, but the good news is that the Governors State University of suburban Chicago will henceforth allow students to take examinations by touch-tone telephone. While the new system may not be suited to lengthy written answers, it will prepare students for the realities of modern life, such as those faced by an unidentified Denver woman. After an intruder tied her in a chair and turned on the gas in her oven, the woman tipped the chair over near her telephone and dialed 911 with her nose. Two hundred sixty members of the University of California's class of 1970 gathered in Berkeley for a belated commencement, twenty years after the original ceremony was canceled in a fit of antiwar fever. Stanford University is extending married-student housing to unwed hetero- and homosexual couples, and at the University of Texas, Miss Candace Brister, whose avid cheers at school sporting events have led friends to dub her "the human microphone," has filed a sexual discrimination suit against the Longhorn Hell Raisers, a 76-member all-male spirit group she wishes to join. "I don't see anything about being female that prevents you from being loud and obnoxious," she argues. If it's revenge they're after, the Hell Raisers may ponder the strategy adopted by high-schoolers Paul Martikainen and Tomo Ilves of Lake Worth, Florida, who received three-day suspensions for coming to school on October 3 reeking of the four cloves of garlic each had consumed for breakfast that morning.



• The struggle against apartheid suffered another setback when the insensitively named Southern right whales returned to Hermanus, South Africa, where their incessant groans in the bay below keep residents awake at night. "To hear a whale blow is like hearing the breath of life," says conservationist Nan Rice of the Dolphin Action and Protection Group, who has yet to attend a football game involving the University of Texas Longhorns. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that more than 200 wild seabirds were killed by zealous researchers seeking evidence in the federal government's case against the Exxon Corporation over the Valdez oil spill off the Alaskan coast last year. Among the species shot for the study were the common eider, the murre, the pelagic cormorant, the double-crested cormorant, the harlequin duck, the crested auklet, the white-winged scoter, and the surf scoter. Fortunately for the Wildlife Service, it's not located in Los Angeles, where the city council voted to outlaw all forms of animal sacrifice.

• On October 3, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic united to form the Fourth German Reich. In Cebu City,

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the Philippines, police who had kept a young man from committing suicide wound up shooting him to death when he broke away for a second try—which may explain why the latest polls show that 63 percent of Manila's residents oppose any American withdrawal from the six U.S. military installations on the islands. At *National Review*'s thirty-fifth anniversary dinner held at New York City's resplendent Waldorf-Astoria, Mr. William F. Buckley, Jr. ruined appetites by announcing his retirement as editor-in-chief, which resulted in plenty of leftovers for the Socialist International's two-day meeting at the same hotel the following week. Next year, the Socialists will save face if they gather in more appropriate surroundings—say, the Kholerkan and Kodru hotel near Kishinev, Moldavia, where the suite used by the late Soviet strongman Leonid Brezhnev can be had for $525 a night. *—WP*

CORRESPONDENCE

Shell Saddam

Tom Bethell's advocacy of non-intervention in the Persian Gulf is the epitome of shortsightedness ("A New World Struggling to be Born," *TAS*, November 1990). While his analysis of petroleum economics may or may not be correct, that aspect is minor compared to the fact that Iraq is an aggressor nation "governed" by a megalomaniac of the Hitler type. Saddam Hussein covets not just the Persian Gulf but the entire Middle East and beyond. He already possesses chemical weapons of several varieties, probably possesses biological weapons including toxins, and appears to be well on the way to acquiring nuclear weaponry. Are we to treat him with the bovine disinterestedness that Bethell proposes? His troops have already indiscriminately slain countless Kuwaitis and foreign workers, raping the women before doing so. Slightly over fifty years ago we heard statements like "peace in our time" and (about the Czechs) "a strange people in a far away country of whom we know little." Is Bethell trying to emulate Chamberlain?

Bethell also ignores the role of the Soviets in perpetrating the invasion of Kuwait. The Soviets are broke, indeed completely insolvent, and a $40 plus per barrel price of oil may tide them over the winter. Moreover, by effecting such a price rise, Gorbachev and his military henchmen can stick it to the United States as punishment for winning the Cold War. The Soviets have trained the Iraqi army, still maintain 1,000 to 2,000 "advisers" there and are still training officers of Iraq's army within the Soviet Union. I have just heard with my own ears corroboration of these statements by an official of the Defense Committee of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR).

I do not necessarily advocate going to war in the Persian Gulf—one should think long and hard before taking that step. But to ignore the mania of a man like Saddam Hussein is irresponsible.

—Robert C. Whitten
Navy League of the United States
Cupertino, California

Sen. Kasten replies to Mr. Bayley

In response to Mr. R. D. Bayley's letter (Correspondence, *TAS*, October 1990): I oppose privatization of Social Security because it would require a massive tax increase on the current generation of workers in order to pay for the benefits of current retirees, and the cost of a new private retirement system for themselves.

Whether Social Security is financed on a partially funded basis with accumulating surpluses, or on a pay-as-you-go basis with income matching expenses (as Senator Moynihan and I have proposed), taxes will have to be raised on the workers of 2025 to finance the Social Security benefits of the elderly in 2025.

Returning Social Security to pay-as-you-go would reduce the tax burden on workers and businesses for the next twenty-five years, thus increasing the rate of savings and economic growth. Accumulating huge surpluses and adding $3.2 billion in taxes to the U.S. economy is a sure-fire prescription for low savings and economic stagnation. Moreover, the history of Congress paints a clear picture: large surpluses are always spent, never saved.

Payroll tax cuts combined with pro-savings, pro-investment tax incentives like tax-deferred Individual Retirement Accounts will expand the economic base enough to reduce the tax burden on the workers of 2025—and quite possibly eliminate the need to raise their taxes altogether.

—Robert W. Kasten
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Errata

Due to an editorial error, the sentence in Thomas Mallon's review last month of *Rabbit at Rest* (p. 43) that reads, "The *Rabbit* books, when held against the fiction of their author's contemporaries, show that by loving his country more than they, Updike is understood better" was misprinted. It should read, ". . . Updike has understood it better."

Similarly, in Joe Queenan's review of *Tom Landry: An Autobiography* (p. 46), we refer to "the Giants' 23-17 overtime victory over the Colts in the 1958 championship game." In fact, the Colts won, on an Alan Ameche touchdown. We apologize to Mr. Queenan for sullying his reputation for expertise, and to Giants fans for reopening an old wound.

The Defiant Ones

The American Spectator has made a grave tactical error in printing the amateurish hatchet job by Andrew Ferguson on David Duke ("The Wizardry of David Duke," *TAS*, October 1990). This type of biased journalism is out of place in *TAS*. I can read this kind of crap in the *Boston Globe*, the *Los Angeles Times*, or the *Washington Post*. Like all liberal imbeciles, they invariably resort to petty personal attacks like David Duke's haircut and the snide comment that his publication *NAAWP News* is printed in his basement. Who cares where it's printed or how he cuts his hair? Wonder how many subscribers this article has alienated. I know of one.

—Lambert Ford
Yucca Valley, California

"A picture is worth 1,000 words," and the drawing of Duke supporters on the cover of the October *American Spectator* captures exquisitely the contempt of cerebral northeastern conservative intellectuals for the southern, majority working-class whites. The bedsheeted Klansmen, the "truck-drivin' man," the rednecks, the rubes, these were *not* the people *I* saw on film clips attending the Duke rallies. I saw respectable, well-dressed middle class people and white college students—you know (or *no*, you forgot), the sort who voted for Ronald Reagan. And now these people are telling me they are so mad at the National Republican Committee perfidy on October 6 that they will be voting "ABB" (Anybody but Bush) in 1992. The Republican party really shot itself in the foot on this one!

You all are always bellyaching about not having had control of the House for thirty-five years, or of losing the Senate yet again. Well, I can assure you that you will NEVER have it so long as Republicans endorse Democrats and drive derelicts and winos to the polls to vote for liberal Democrats as happened in New Orleans on October 6! Lee Atwater of Willie Horton fame tried to get five percent of the black vote and in the process will be losing more than fifty percent of the white vote. Pretty damn stupid.

What other surprises does *The American Spectator* have in store for us Southern paleoconservatives? I suppose we can look forward to some Pat Buchanan-bashing next—or have I missed it already? Well, I let my subscription to *TAS* lapse years ago and I can see the wisdom in that now.

—R. G. Cardwell
Austin, Texas

Andrew Ferguson's report on David Duke was well written and perceptive. It will help deflate yet another demagogue on the American scene. Aside from Duke's nasty background, Ferguson believes him to be an uninspiring personality. Let us wish Duke good riddance, and the sooner the better.

Unfortunately, the issues he espouses [sic], e.g., welfarism and affirmative action, are critically important to United States internal peace, prosperity, and progress, both for the beneficiaries of the system and society at large.

The AFDC Program, whose beneficiaries number in the tens of millions, is a program ripe for investigative reporting. I disagree with Mr. Ferguson's statement that the average birth rate in this group is about the same as the United States average (about 1.8 offspring per mother). Furthermore, the generational gap appears to have been compressed to about fifteen years.

This subset of women and children, in the main supported by government welfare, is reproducing at well over the general birthrate and the rate of increase is essentially exponential. Please check the exact figures with the responsible United States agencies, *if they will provide them to you*. One may assume using simple arithmetic that this population subset will constitute approximately half of the United States population in another one or two generations. I refer readers to an article written in 1835 by Alexis de Tocqueville on the English legal pauper systems, as reprinted in the *Public Interest*, Winter 1983. The same destructive effects on English society of legally established

(continued on page 54)

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EDITORIALS

NEWT THE WHALER

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

George Herbert Walker Bush has obviously never read the memoirs of Harry S. Truman or Hubert Humphrey, and Congressman Newt Gingrich has. Had the very capable gentleman who now serves as President read these memoirs he would have avoided the weeks of contretemps that he has suffered in budget negotiations, and with Gingrich at his side he might now be leading Republican challengers to victory against incumbent Democrats all over the country. Yet because President Bush is a gentleman he has had his "no new taxes" policy and much of his Reaganite allure denied him. He is headed for a terrible midterm defeat.

In the memoirs of Truman and Humphrey, our gentlemanly President would discover why he has just been taken to the cleaners by the Democrats and perhaps why his most useful lieutenant on Capitol Hill is Gingrich, the Republican whip who led the brassy Republican revolt against the Washington establishment's budget deal of September 30. Truman, at ease in retirement, and Humphrey, honored and loved at the end of a distinguished career, both wrote memoirs containing much good sense and many interesting observations; but never does either man pass up an opportunity for partisan sniping. Neither commits the ultimate *faux pas* as a successful Democrat to leave on record a generous reference to any living member of the loyal opposition. Newt Gingrich will some day write similar memoirs, or he will not be true to his political instincts.

He will also not remain the asset to the Republic that he now is. He is a defender of the wisdom of the 1980s. In Washington he is the defender of the taxpayers' 1980s tax cuts. Thus he is our staunch champion of economic growth. He recognizes that only economic growth can diminish the size of the deficit as a percentage of gross national product—which is all that can be hoped for in balancing the budget, given the prodigal ways of Washington's establishment. Gingrich is also one of the few Republicans capable of emulating what is best in the Democratic politicos. I have in mind the Democrats' edifying ardor for eye-gouges, blows below the belt—and venomous partisanship. The Democrats are our nation's most professional politicans. I admire them.

Gingrich has made the astute observation that a Democrat rises with the sun and contemplates the many ways he can bring mischief to Republicans. The Republican contemplates what he can do to govern. President Bush has been duly concerned about the growing deficit, but he made the mistake of believing that the Democrats would compromise on their lust to spend if he would compromise on his pious promises against higher taxes. The Democrats have compromised nothing. We know that the President has joined with the Democrats in support of deficit-reduction agreements and raised taxes. What very few Americans know is that these agreements do not cut spending. (See my colleague Tom Bethell's column on the next page for details.) The original deal that Gingrich killed would have allowed an 8 percent increase in spending from fiscal 1990 to fiscal 1991, an increase far in excess of inflation. As Ronald Reagan learned in 1982, Democrats are biologically incapable of spending cuts.

A major reason for the federal deficit is the swarm of voracious lobbyists feasting off budget bills. When tax rates are high the lobbyists are particularly successful in arranging exemptions for special interests. Consequently, upper-income earners pay less in taxes and the middle classes pay more. When Ronald Reagan lowered marginal tax rates in 1981 and 1986, these exemptions lost value or were pared back. Hence, through the 1980s there was a shift in actual tax burden away from the middle class to the rich. The day the budget negotiators began negotiating higher taxes, the lobbyists converged on the negotiators, and the exemptions and subsidies spread like viruses.

Senator Mitchell's constituents in the boat-building industry got theirs. Senator Dole's constituents in the aircraft industry were remembered. Senator Bentsen's supporters in the oil patch, Senator Moynihan's friends in the arts, all the wheelers and dealers have returned to raise the cost of government for the middle class. There is nothing new here, save the arrival of Congressman Gingrich and his rebels. They oppose taxes, favor growth, and promise to gouge eyes and rabbit-punch their way to victory over the Washington establishment. President Bush should wish them well. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Kitty Hawk, North Carolina

On October 5, I suffered a shock, and immediately took off to the beach to reflect on The Immensities (best done with a fishing rod in hand). The bold and ebullient William F. Buckley, Jr., at a festive dinner for the magazine he founded, *National Review*, ended another of those mellifluous speeches of his with a sob of emotion and retired as editor-in-chief. The thirty-five years during which he edited *NR* and shaped the conservatism that dominated American politics in the 1980s got him. I never thought they would.

When he began the magazine, he was the *enfant terrible* of a small movement of anti-Communists, traditionalists, and libertarians. Eventually they composed the conservative movement, and for thirty-five years that movement has remained completely out of synch with the Republic's intellectual class. It is now, of course, obvious to all, save a few drunks and the Republic's bovine intelligentsia, that Bill and his conservative co-conspirators were out of synch with the intellectual class because Bill and company were in synch with the American people. Hence, they were abominated by the intelligentsia whose terms of abuse never applied to

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Bill or, come to think of it, to the American people.

Contrary to the bovine intelligentsia, Bill and the American people are not racist or imperialist. They are generous and confident. They are not reactionary or timid. They are daring, hard-working, eager for progress. At his core, the typical American is devoted to family, country, personal liberty, economic growth, and expanded opportunity for all. That's Bill, and with a few more pretty thoughts thrown in, that's conservatism.

When Bill began formulating and popularizing the conservative position, the bovine intelligentsia frequently disparaged him as a monarchist or at least an adherent to aristocracy. There is no truth to that charge, though one can understand its origin. Bill is a gentleman, and very few of his antagonists ever encounter gentlemen. In fact, at great universities and at other bemused provinces where the bovine intelligentsia dominate, public toilets can never be designated by signs that read "Gentlemen" and "Ladies" lest confusion and protest ensue.

Bill is also the possessor of a jarringly intelligent mind, thoroughly engaged with thought and ideas; and that is another reason that he is out of synch with the intelligentsia, a group that increasingly confuses thought with psychotherapy. Of course, the American intelligentsia's addiction to psychiatry is no laughing matter. It is a fact that no other group of Americans contains the intelligentsia's ratio of individuals who think that they are President of the United States, though the clergy comes close. But enough of this shameless bashing of American intellectuals. I bring it up only because Bill has exemplified all that an intellectual should be, and the average American intellectual falls so pitifully below the mark.

Rushing through his decades of public life, Bill has written a Himalaya of

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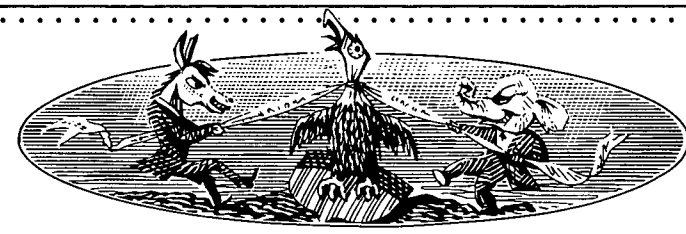
CAPITOL IDEAS



SMOKE, MIRRORS, AND THE ADVERSARY PRESS

by Tom Bethell

President Bush's performance in the budget talks perhaps even surpasses conservatives' worst suspicions about his lack of political convictions or even political common sense. The damage to the Republican party will be considerable, and Bush himself is unlikely to recover fully from it. He will soon find himself looking back nostalgically to July 1990 as a time when his position was seemingly unassailable. Then he made two careless moves. First he placed 200,000 U.S. troops in the Saudi Arabian desert. The alliance that he was so highly praised for assembling will henceforth make life difficult for him. A few weeks later, he abandoned for good his pledge not to raise taxes. Once again, the Beltway culture and the media praised him for doing so. The final two weeks before the mid-term elections he will spend campaigning for massive tax increases. The "$500 billion deficit reduction package" will be relabeled, aptly, the "1990 Bush tax increase."

In abandoning his tax pledge, Bush showed that he never understood how potent it was. Throwing it away was an error on a par with that of an inexperienced card player who is dealt four aces but believes them to be low rather than high. Bush's political judgment does seem to be that weak. On October 6, the *Washington Post* reported that a "long-time Bush associate" said of Bush: "He didn't like it [domestic policy] when he first ran for President, he didn't like it when he was vice president, and he doesn't like it much now. He knows he can't avoid it, but that doesn't make him have to like it. All you've got to do is spend five minutes talking to him about China and five talking about the budget to know where he's at." (James Baker, one wonders?)

Three days later Bush was asked at a news conference: "Why do you think you're so much more comfortable with and better at foreign matters than domestic? To some people, it seems almost like two Presidents."

"Well," he replied, he was troubled because "I don't really know the answer to it. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that in one, I think the Vandenberg theory applies. People really basically want to support the President on foreign affairs, and partisanship does, in a sense, stop at the water's edge. Whereas on domestic policy, here I am with Democratic majorities in the Senate and House, having to try to persuade them to do what I think is best. And it's complicated."

His mistake was trying to persuade "them." He should have tried to persuade the American people—not to "do" anything, but to understand that the Congress had by no means given up its big-spending ways, and that nothing could be reformed, certainly not the budget deficit, until this was corrected.

One day, elected leaders in Washington will understand that by drawing battle lines they can win battles. Notice that I didn't say Republican politicians. The current Republican leadership does not think in terms of winning and the best we can hope for is that they will finally retire to their respective golf courses. Pursuing the golfing metaphor briefly, it's more appropriate to think of Bush, Dole, Michel & Co. not so much as golfers as caddies: Caddies to the Democrats. Bush is Caddy in Chief (as he wavered on taxes and capital gains, Maureen Dowd of the *New York Times* reported on October 21, "he clung to the Democratic leadership and kept House Republicans at a distance"); Michel is the Dutiful Caddy, and Bob Dole the Angry Caddy—angry at the younger Republicans like Newt Gingrich of Georgia, for wanting to be players rather than caddies.

I agree with Paul Gigot of the *Wall Street Journal* and Tony Snow of the *Washington Times* that the unacknowledged battle lines are demographic. The younger Republicans know they can win if they are permitted to fight. Vice President Quayle understands this. So do Gingrich and Reps. Bob Walker (R-Penn.) and Vin Weber (R-Minn.). Bush doesn't. The older Republicans, almost without exception, are unable to think of themselves as the initiators of winning policies. One day Bush went up to Capitol Hill, having signed the stopgap spending bill he had threatened to veto two days earlier, and said: "I'm here to discuss what we can do at the White House to help move the process forward." Spoken like a Republican who remembers the Depression and thinks of government in World War II terms: Let's make it bipartisan—best of all a national unity government.

On September 30, Bush notoriously announced that he had managed to get a $500 billion deficit reduction deal—the result of "blood, sweat, and fears." "It has the largest spending savings ever—more than $300 billion," Bush said in his televised address. "For the first time," he added, "leaders of the Democratic Congress have agreed to real cuts that will be enforced by law, not promises. No smoke, no mirrors . . . "

Notice the awkward phrase "spending savings." Right there, you can see smoke and mirrors.

Budget numbers are tiresome, but bear with me. You probably haven't seen these numbers in print. All you have to know is that federal fiscal years begin three months ahead of calendar years, on October 1. So we are just beginning a new fiscal year, 1991. The relevant budget numbers are put out by the Office of Management and Budget, presided over by Dick Darman—the man primarily responsible for leading Bush into this domestic policy morass.

I phoned the OMB to find out just two numbers: the overall government spending totals, or "outlays," for fiscal year 1990 (just ended); and for comparison purposes, the comparable outlays for the year just beginning. A woman at the press office answered the phone. I won't give her name because she was quite candid and forthcoming. "There are lots of different numbers that are correct," she said. "Probably up to about nine numbers." →

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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Such as? Well, the January estimates and the July estimates, the post-agreement estimates, the adjusted consolidated baseline estimates and the Gramm-Rudman baseline estimates. *At least* nine numbers. All very confusing, but they can be simplified down to something easily understood. As follows: The latest estimate for 1990 outlays (the amount of money the federal government spent last year) is, in billions of dollars: $1,260. Here is the amount that the government is planning to spend next year, *after* the famous $500 billion "deficit reduction" package: $1,360 billion.

Subtract one number from the other, and you will find that there is an increase of $100 billion from one year to another. That is an eight percent increase. The *total* federal budget was $100 billion at the time of President Kennedy's inauguration. Today, a one-year increase of $100 billion is called . . . ?

Deficit reduction.

On October 1, Susan Rasky of the *New York Times* reported that the famous deficit-reduction plan "would bring the deficit down by $40 billion next year." David Wessel and Alan Murray reported in the *Wall Street Journal*: "The bipartisan plan calls for $34.4 billion in spending cuts and tax increases in the fiscal year beginning today." I looked all through both newspapers for the spending totals, but they were nowhere to be found. The *Journal* filled two full pages of copy and had ten reporters on the story (Murray, Wessel, Jeffrey Birnbaum, Kenneth Bacon, Hilary Stout, Bruce Ingersoll, Bob Davis, Walter Mossberg, Jackie Calmes, David Rogers), but nowhere were the budget totals to be found. A box, setting forth the "economic assumptions underlying the accord," gave the forecast of GNP growth as a percentage only. Again, the aggregate totals were not there. Thus readers had no way of knowing that the reported "$34.4 billion spending cuts and tax increases" actually entailed a $100 billion spending increase.

What is going on here can be illustrated by the following example. The chief executive officer of a corporation plans to give himself a $140,000 raise. Then he cuts it back to $100,000 and announces to the world that his salary next year will be reduced by $40,000. *Wall Street Journal* reporters would not sit still for such shenanigans from the private sector. But with Dick Darman and the OMB, they are totally uncritical. For the next three weeks, these numbers continued to be ignored by the *Journal*'s news department, although Paul Craig Roberts did list the projected outlays and receipts in a box on the editorial page on October 3, and Jim Miller, the former Budget director, drew attention to the huge spending increase in 1991 in a short piece on the same page.

But the reporters showed no interest in the numbers. They thereby not merely disguised the smoke and mirrors, but, wittingly or not, constituted a key element of the smoke-and-mirror apparatus. The unreported numbers likewise hide the massive increase in federal spending since President Reagan became President. In fiscal 1980, total spending was $591 billion. As Paul Craig Roberts has pointed out, in the decade 1981-91, federal revenues increased by 90 percent, but spending increased by 107 percent. That's why there's a deficit today. The tax-rate reductions did produce big revenue increases, but insufficient to feed the giant appetite for spending on Capitol Hill. This is the budget story that reporters cannot bring themselves to report, and in fact seem eager to disguise.

I telephoned the *Journal*'s Alan Murray, to inquire why these numbers had been omitted. He said he couldn't talk about it. I would have to talk to Al Hunt, the paper's Washington bu-

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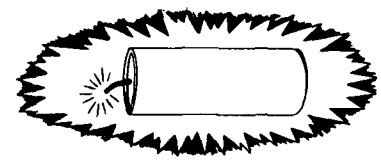

Harvard historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. once said that prejudice against the Roman Catholic Church is "the deepest bias in the history of the American people."

There is a tenacious myth among Americans generally that says Catholics are stupid, lazy, and superstitious.

Among fundamentalists there is that whopper of a myth that the Pope is the Anti-Christ and the Catholic Church is the Whore of Babylon, a hideous and many-tentacled pagan cult.

Among evangelicals there is a more sedate myth that Catholicism is a numbing religion riddled with dead formulas, empty rituals, and rigid prohibitions — a legalistic religion which fears the Bible and freezes out the grace of Christ.

Among secular humanists there is a politically handy myth that only Catholics regard abortion as murder, and that no one in his right mind who is not a Catholic would object to legalized abortion.

Secular humanists also purvey the myth that Catholics call abortion murder because they are puritanical and hate sex. Moreover, it is said, Catholics opposed to abortion don't really care about the sanctity of human life, as they claim to, because they are utterly indifferent to the threat to innocent life posed by nuclear weapons.

Then, there is the abiding myth that Catholics can't really explain why they are Catholic, that when Catholics are challenged their convictions crumble, and hence Catholics fear democracy, the open circulation of ideas, and freedom of religion.

Oddly, myths about Catholicism have even worked their way into the Catholic Church herself. Hence, among modernist Catholics there is a corrosive myth that Catholics who believe in the creeds and the Church's magisterium are both narrow-minded ignoramuses who self-righteously cling to the letter of the law and mean-spirited bigots who fear Protestants and fail in charity toward their neighbors.

This is an intimidating syllabus of myths — but happily, each myth is inaccurate and erroneous, and each one is disproved by the existence and insistence of the NEW OXFORD REVIEW. Actually, we at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW don't waste much time fretting about the myth-makers; rather, we are content to be living witnesses to the truth about Catholicism and the falsehood of all the myths.

The established media have duly noted us: *Time* finds us "conservative" (true enough, when it comes to doctrine, morality, and ecclesial authority), *Newsweek* says we're "cheeky" (probably more true than we realize), and *The New York Times* thinks our editorial policy is "curious" (probably very true, at least from the *Times*'s perspective).

The point is: if you want a Roman Catholic magazine that confounds the conventional stereotypes, then the NEW OXFORD REVIEW is for you. Consider the words of Francis X. Maier, Editor of the weekly *National Catholic Register*: "The NEW OXFORD REVIEW is simply the best publication of its kind in the United States — always provocative, always interesting, always solidly Catholic." If that's what you've been looking for in a Catholic monthly magazine, then help us explode myths and prejudices, and subscribe today!

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reau chief. Hunt's secretary wanted to know the exact nature of my inquiry. Eventually, the deputy bureau chief, Thomas Petzinger, Jr., got back to me "on this matter of why we're not giving the bottom line." He said the reporters in the bureau "make a pretty convincing case that it's hard to make these numbers rise to the level of the news of the day." But that doesn't explain why they weren't published at least once. He agreed. "Being the newspaper of record on these things, I think we probably have a duty to get that number on the record, no matter how much we have to qualify it."

He added that the outlay figures "do not capture the controversies and choices being made." But failing to report the outlays conceals the key point that the really hard choice—spending reduction, or even a spending freeze—is *not* being made. The average reader can hardly be expected to guess that the federal spending machine is roaring away as usual when he is told that next year there will be "$34.4 billion in spending cuts and tax increases."

Petzinger added that "outlays" was a "pretty loosey-goosey number at best, based on some freewheeling assumptions." That's true—and the numbers do change constantly. But precisely for that reason, a story on the loosey-goosey nature of the numbers that the brazen Darman has been using is one that is crying out to be written. Nonetheless, the *Journal*'s reporting has been characterized by an absence of skepticism about Darman's numbers. According to a source who prefers anonymity, Al Hunt's shop "has worked hand in glove with Darman" throughout this whole exercise.

At least in the three-week period following the $500-billion announcement, the spending totals were also not mentioned in the *Washington Post*, which had budget stories by twenty-one reporters and several columnists. But they didn't mention the outlays. *Time* and *Newsweek* didn't even come close in three consecutive issues. If any network TV news reporter mentioned the numbers, I would be very surprised. The *New York Times*, in an October 3 story by Robert Pear ("Savings Seen As Less Than Predicted"), did give most of the numbers, in a spirit of well-deserved skepticism. ("Under the budget agreement, federal spending would increase in fiscal year 1991, [but would decline by $11 billion] from $1,392 billion in fiscal year 1992 to $1,381 billion in 1993. It then calls for a further decline of $38 billion, to $1,343 in 1994. The projected decline in spending would mark a striking change. Total federal spending has not declined in any year since 1965.") As far as I know, Pear scooped the reportorial field with these numbers. But his story was on page D27. More typical was the page one headline on October 1, over a story by David Rosenbaum: "And the Victor Is: Bush? Taking Punches Now May Help Him Later." Oh, sure.

"People probably should be reminded that, no matter how these things go, the spending always goes up," said Tom Petzinger. Right. He added that "I think it would be good to get it in print at some point." Right on. The numbers no doubt will be published. But not before George Bush has signed on to the "deficit reduction" deal, which in reality is a big tax increase to pay for a big spending increase. In 1982, remember, President Reagan was hoodwinked with the promise that he would get three dollars in spending cuts for every dollar of tax increase. Spending increased as usual, and Reagan later expressed annoyance at the deception. Now Bush has been taken in, too. The deficit reduction that Darman promised him will not materialize—especially not with tax increases. I hasten to add that Bush only has himself (and Darman) to blame. But it's at least worth noting who blew the smoke and held the mirrors. □

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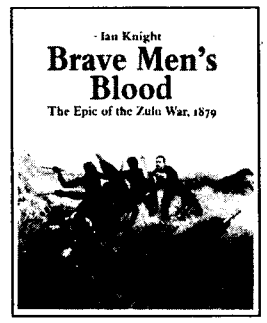

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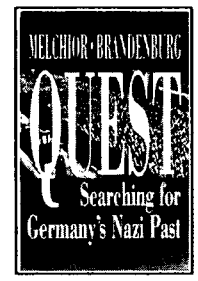

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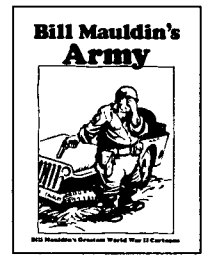

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William Rosenau

POOR PERU

Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley is the coca-growing capital of the world. It is also home to a uniquely violent Maoist insurgency. And those are the least of the country's problems.

The world's biggest coca-growing region begins about 250 kilometers northeast of Lima. It is staggeringly large. The Upper Huallaga Valley is about three times the size of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Before the late 1970s, nobody paid much attention to this hot, remote piece of jungle, including the Peruvian government, which didn't even build a road there until the 1950s. But today, the Upper Huallaga is the object of intense official interest, in Washington as well as Lima.

Coca growing per se doesn't bother Peruvians much—they're far more worried about food shortages, inflation, and terrorist violence. But it does concern the U.S. Congress and the White House, which have been arguing for the last few years that cocaine is a threat to the security of the United States. As a result, the Upper Huallaga Valley, or "UHV," as the State Department likes to call it, has become a "front line" in the drug war, and visits by U.S. congressional delegations, presidential rhetoric, and Yankee dollars have had the effect of concentrating Peruvian minds wonderfully on the issue.

But a visit to the Upper Huallaga—or anywhere else in Peru, for that matter—should be enough to disabuse most gringos of any sanguine notions they might have about the likelihood of eliminating coca from the valley. Recent conversations with Peruvian and American officials and journalists in Lima, as well as a trip to the U.S.-financed anti-drug base at Santa Lucia, convinced me that Peru has much bigger problems to solve than coca growing.

"Lima in the wintertime is a hellhole," an American academic warns me before I leave Boston, a town not known for its balmy climate. Built along the most inhospitable part of the coast, the capital sits in a bizarre Andean microclimate—cloudy, misty, and cold every day from May to December. A miasma generated from thousands of exhaust-belching buses and cars adds to the gloom. Frequent blackouts and brownouts—usually the result of terrorist bombings of electricity pylons—give the city a sinister air; indeed, as a cab driver described it on the way in from the airport—which was blacked out shortly after I arrived—Lima had become an "eerie" place.

Making matters even worse is the terrible physical overcrowding and poverty that overwhelm the capital. About eight million people are jammed into Lima, and most of them are poor. Many live in the deceptively pleasant-sounding shantytowns ("La Flor," "Heroes del Pacifico") that ring the city. Known in Spanish as *pueblos jovenes* ("young towns"), these conglomerations are actually improvements over the miserable mountain villages from which many of their residents fled.

Even the "nice" parts of Lima seem remarkably seedy, and sometimes dangerous—the relatively well-heeled neighborhood of Miraflores, for example, is infested with pickpockets and other thieves. On top of all this, the city government recently discovered that Lima's aquifer is being drained at an alarming rate, and that the capital will run out of water by the end of the decade. In short, Lima can at times seem "a never-ending nightmare," as the trendy-left (but generally accurate) authors of *The Real Guide: Peru* put it.

Many Peruvians believe the nightmare will get worse. The economy is a disaster and, for the moment, it overshadows all of the country's other considerable woes. President Alberto Fujimori, in an effort to control the hyperinflation created by his Social Democrat predecessor, Alan Garcia, has eliminated many of the subsidies that benefited workers, businessmen, and middle-class civil servants, and he has allowed the market to set prices for most goods. Gasoline, for example, was so heavily subsidized under Garcia that Peruvians actually smuggled it out of the country for resale abroad. That subsidy has been ended, and the government has added a massive tax, bringing the cost to about four dollars a gallon—making it some of the most expensive gasoline in the world.

Between last January and August, inflation was 2,886 percent, according to *Cuanto*, a magazine I found highly entertaining, despite the fact it does nothing more than calculate prices—a difficult task, given that they change several times daily.

In the past five years, economists say, prices have grown by 2.2 *million* percent. The introduction last August of a new denomination of the *inti*, the national currency, is a perfect example of this Weimar-type hyperinflation. Early in the month, the government began issuing one-million *inti* notes for the first time; but even these proved inadequate, and a few weeks later it was forced to begin printing a five-million *inti* note. Despite these huge denominations, changing U.S. dollars for Peruvian currency is still a wallet-bulging experience: fifty U.S. dollars typically get you a wad of Peruvian notes nearly an inch thick.

Most Peruvians recognize the need for the government to control spending and inflation, but they're angry over the pace of the reform measures, dubbed "Fuji shock" by the press. Fujimori's defeat of the staunchly pro-market novelist Mario Vargas Llosa in last summer's elections was due in part to his pledge to move slowly; instead, Peruvians were horrified to discover

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basic food prices increasing from between 400 to 1,000 percent overnight. The minimum wage, roughly $42 a month, was barely adequate before. Now, according to one American economist in Lima, "all it gets you is a round trip to work on the bus and one piece of bread a day."

For the past decade, Peru has also been confronting an insurgency whose ruthlessness, fanaticism, puritanism, and love of violence is unprecedented in this hemisphere. *Sendero Luminoso*, or "Shining Path," is an ultra-orthodox Maoist cult movement founded and led by Abimael Guzman, a shadowy former philosophy professor.

Dubbing himself the "Fourth Sword of Marxism"—the first three being Marx, Lenin, and Mao—Guzman has become to his followers a kind of deified "philosopher-warrior," the only true Communist leader in the world. Outside support for his movement he deems impossible, since "revisionists" and other traitors have come to power in Peking, Moscow, Havana, and Tirana.[1] His weird hubris is further evident in the nonce title he has chosen for himself: Presidente Gonzalo.

Violence is central to his "people's war." Despite his mild-mannered appearance—Sendero's kitschy propaganda posters depict him as a bespectacled, rather bland-looking individual—Guzman advocates violence as both a means to destroy Peruvian society and as a psychically purifying act for his cadres. "Violence is history's midwife. . . . Violence is a universal law with no exception," Guzman said five years ago.

Initially dismissed as hopeless crazies when they launched their campaign of terror in 1980, Sendero has become a major threat to peace and stability in Peru. Political violence has caused $18 billion in damage to the economy, according to a Peruvian congressional estimate, and thousands of civilians and soldiers have died as a result of Sendero bombings, assassinations (dubbed "selective annihilation" in Guzmanspeak), and other forms of mayhem.

A favorite tactic is to chop off the head of a suspected "collaborator," usually a helpless peasant, and then sew it on backwards. In the hands of Sendero, dynamite becomes a particularly horrific tool: they have been known to fasten lighted TNT to a duck, and let it wander into a telephone switching exchange. Then there is the so-called *niñobomba*: dynamite strapped to a child and exploded near the Sendero target.

Large portions of the country are unsafe; the departments that make up the central third of the country have been declared "Emergency Zones," and are under the control of a military commander. During a typical month this year, Sendero Luminoso carried out attacks in the department of Ayacucho (a longtime Sendero stronghold), the town of Tingo Maria, Lima, and in Huancayo province. The terrorism has reached such proportions that *Caretas*, Peru's leading newsmagazine, has taken to publishing a column each issue listing the week's subversive acts, as well as counterinsurgency operations by the state security forces. (Journalists who go to Sendero country go well armed, and in groups. One reporter I meet proudly displays his arsenal to me: a ferocious-looking Uzi, a much-prized stainless-steel Colt .45, a box of grenades, and a short-barreled "riot gun," a weapon his young son, a toddler, delights in loading and pumping.)

The question of Sendero's military strength and popular support is debated constantly by politicians, the army, the police, and a group of journalists and academics specializing in the insurgency. Raul Gonzalez, a leading "senderologist," believes that Sendero's strength has peaked—and his articles to this effect have led to countless death threats from Sendero, forcing him to live a near-underground existence. Others say that the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), a much smaller, more conventional Guevaraist insurgency, is the greater long-term threat.

But Gustavo Gorriti, a journalist and scholar who is writing a three-volume history of the movement, argues that Sendero is actually growing in strength. "They're winning the war, in fact," Gorriti tells me in his comfortable (but highly secure) house in Lima. "The number of attacks this year make it the most violent of the decade. In the Upper Huallaga, the army is reporting huge casualties on the Shining Path side. But the army is suffering more casualties too."

Coca growing per se doesn't bother Peruvians much—they're far more worried about food shortages, inflation, and terrorist violence. But it does concern the U.S. Congress and the White House.

Until a few years ago, the U.S. government had little interest in the Pol Pot-like activities of Presidente Gonzalo and his comrades. But then it was discovered that Sendero was increasingly linked with a problem that did concern the United States—coca growing and trafficking.

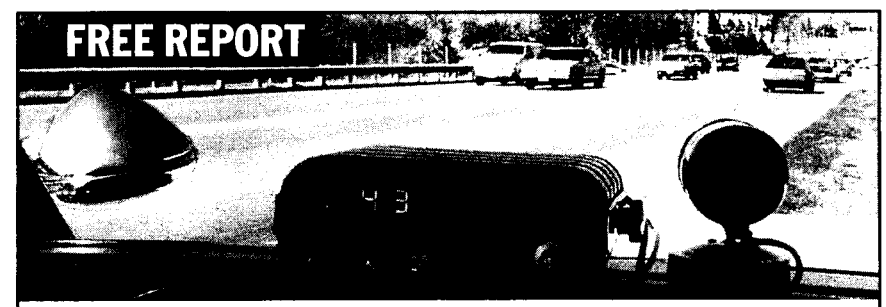
From the earliest days of its "people's war," Sendero had targeted the Upper Huallaga Valley. Isolated and relatively fertile, the valley became an ideal refuge during the mid-1980s, when the government's counterinsurgency campaign temporarily chased them out of Ayacucho and other departments.

At first, the dirt-poor peasants around the UHV town of Uchiza welcomed Shining Path. During the early years of the decade, Uchiza had become the coca capital of Peru, a lawless, wide-open town crowded with prostitutes, gangsters, barflies, and other riff-raff associated with the booming narcotics trade. But even though these peasants, and some 200,000 others in the valley, were growing coca for a living—having flocked there during the past ten years in search of a better life—they remained God-fearing *campesinos* at heart, and the lifestyles of the narcorabble horrified them.

What is more, the traffickers who bought the coca leaves from the peasants frequently abused and cheated them. Sendero promised to end that, and the terrorists began operating as middlemen between the growers and the narcos, demanding ever-higher prices for the crop and shooting buyers who beat up on *campesinos*. For all its puritanism, Sendero has never opposed coca growing. In Sendero's view, cocaine is the product of decadent, imperialist nations such as the United States. As "Comandante Tomas" told the Sendero-controlled *El Diario* newspaper in 1988, "We aren't against coca, because that would mean being against the farmers. If we avoid consumption here in our country, the problem of coca is solved."

To the delight of the peasants, Sendero began cleaning up Uchiza and other drug towns, shooting homosexuals, banishing prostitutes, closing down nightclubs, and publicly flogging coca-paste smokers. Soon Sendero established total control of the coca business throughout the Upper Huallaga. As General Juan Zarate, the former head of the Drug Police Division explains to me, "Subversion and drug trafficking became inseparable." Sendero began to extract fees from traffickers who wanted to use the illegal jungle landing strips under Sendero control—as much as $10,000 per flight, according to some estimates. (Although Sendero makes millions of dollars a year off the coca trade, few observers believe the organization has been corrupted by the "business"; any cadres suspected of be-

[1]However, Shining Path does have a small U.S. "support group," headquartered, of course, in Berkeley, California.



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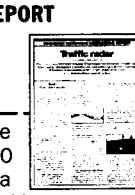

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ing tainted are summarily executed.)

But by the end of the decade, the alliance between peasants and terrorists began to unravel. As long as they were left alone, the *campesinos* tolerated, and sometimes welcomed, Sendero's presence. Being ultra-orthodox Maoists, however, the cadres couldn't stomach an apolitical peasantry, and they began demanding the growers' attendance at indoctrination sessions. "It became like Tiananmen Square during the Cultural Revolution," says Gorriti. Sendero's zealotry was getting old, and when the army took over the valley following a massive Sendero attack on the Uchiza police garrison in April 1989, thousands of people came out to welcome the new military commander, General Alberto Arciniega.

Arciniega waged a devastating campaign against Sendero. Winning broad support in and around Uchiza by allowing the peasants to grow coca in peace was central to his victory. "We told the people, 'We are your army, you don't need Shining Path,' " Arciniega explains to me in his Lima office. "We told the peasants that we wouldn't fight against them. We understood that growing coca was the only thing they could do to make a living." The much-feared Peruvian drug police were prohibited from conducting crop-eradication operations in the valley. Arciniega began digging wells, bringing in electricity, and initiating other forms of goodwill-building "civic action"—a key component of any successful counterinsurgency plan.

His strategy worked, and the terrorists were driven from the Uchiza area. Thousands of residents once again jammed the town's plaza, this time to cheer the general for ridding them of Sendero. But the Peruvian police, and the U.S. State Department, which had spent millions of dollars since the early 1980s fighting coca in the Upper Huallaga, weren't so pleased with Arciniega.

Although some U.S. officials understood the dangers Sendero posed to Peru—and the role that the terrorists played in narcotics trafficking—others insisted that Arciniega's campaign was too easy on the growers and traffickers. "We strongly disagree with his approach," Assistant Secretary of State for Narcotics Affairs Melvin Levitsky said last fall. But according to Arciniega, "It's not true when the State Department says I don't want to fight against the narcotraffickers. I fought against them," he tells me.

Last December, after serving a little more than eight months, Arciniega stepped down as emergency-zone commander. U.S. officials deny that any pressure was placed on him—Arciniega himself tells me that he left voluntarily—but many of his sympathizers believe that the United States had him sacked. His immediate successor didn't fare much better: he was dismissed after DEA agents photographed some of his men standing guard as narcos loaded coca paste aboard a plane.

To get to the Santa Lucia anti-drug base in the Upper Huallaga Valley, you first have to go to the police air force hanger on the fringes of the main airport in Lima. There, a U.S.-supplied C-123 transport plane will ferry you to Tingo Maria, and then on to Santa Lucia—all in all, about an hour and a half of flying time. The plane was probably once a state-of-the-art craft; nowadays it seems quaint, with its oil-dripping turbo-prop engines and the oxygen masks you have to strap to your head in the unpressurized cabin.

After you've flown over the Andes, which lie between the valley and Lima, the jungle emerges below you—mile after mile of green, flat land, dotted here and there with small farmhouses. The sluggish, brownish-gray Huallaga River—utterly poisoned by kerosene, sulfuric acid, lime, and other chemicals used to refine coca—dominates the landscape. My traveling companion, whom I'll call Alberto, points out the coca patches: little plots of land with plants growing in perfectly straight lines. With my untrained eye, I count at least a dozen during the Tingo Maria-to-Santa Lucia leg of the trip. I see many more columns of smoke, the telltale sign of jungle being cleared to grow coca.

After clammy, cold Lima, Santa Lucia seems like a furnace. Carved out of the jungle in 1987, and refortified last year, the hundred-acre "forward base" is the headquarters for U.S.-backed anti-drug operations in Peru. Living here are about 400 "CORAH" coca eradication workers, a hundred Peruvian National Police, half a dozen or so long-haired U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) cops, and a handful of personnel from the State Department's Narcotics Assistance Unit (NAU), which pays for the place.

The base itself resembles a prison work camp: barracks surrounded by razor wire and guard towers. Alberto thoughtfully points out the minefields as we stroll around the camp, stopping here and there for snapshots (me with an Uzi, me standing in front of the razor wire, gazing thoughtfully across the river separating the base from Sendero land beyond).

Vintage Huey helicopters, surrounded by protective concrete-filled bags, are scattered around Santa Lucia. The police use these to bring the relatively well-paid, but sometimes short-lived, CORAH workers out into the field to destroy any coca seedlings they happen to find. Well-armed paramilitary policemen accompany them; they're there to protect the machete-wielding eradicators from any irate growers or traffickers they might meet in the countryside. They're also worried about Sendero, which has been known to shoot CORAH workers and nail them to stakes.

A favorite Sendero tactic is to chop off the head of a suspected "collaborator," usually a helpless peasant, and then sew it on backwards.

The futility of such "manual eradication," as the U.S. government calls it, has been apparent to Peruvian and American officials for years. The State Department has been trying to persuade Fujimori to allow the spraying of "Spike," a herbicide it believes will destroy much of the valley's coca without harming humans, livestock, or food crops. But although some testing was permitted under Alan Garcia, nobody believes that it will ever be sprayed on a large scale.

For one thing, Sendero as well as the large and highly vocal legal left will cry "Yankee Imperialism"; for another, Greenpeace has launched an anti-Spike campaign, and in this environment-crazed age, it seems unlikely that the U.S. Congress will pay to defoliate the Peruvian jungle.[2] Most important, the government realizes that legal crops can never give peasants the income that coca does, and it doesn't want 200,000 angry ex-coca growers on its hands. "Do you think they'll return quietly to wherever it is they came from?" Alberto asks me. "Sendero Luminoso is nothing compared to what these people would be like up in arms."

After an hour or so, the base and the landscape around it start to seem a little forbidding. Despite all of the people at Santa Lucia, it's remarkably quiet. Last April, Sendero hit the base with small-arms fire. Nobody was hurt, but the police have built some fortified dugouts to protect the CORAH workers if another attack comes.[3] I don't even want to think about what this place is like after dark, with squads of Senderistas prowling around beyond the wire, just waiting to chop off heads. "At night, you know they're watching you," Alberto intones. "They're the army of the night," he adds, only slightly melodramatically.

We decide to have a look from one of the watchtowers, and we snap some photos of a police unit trotting around the base, "calling out" numbers in true military hard-guy fashion. I have to get one last photo of them outside the barracks, I tell Alberto, and we stroll over to the building. A British-made armored personnel carrier, donated by Margaret Thatcher, is parked nearby, and I take a picture of it, and get Alberto to snap one of me in front of a little shrine to the Virgin Mary.

Then, as I'm reloading my camera, a Peruvian police colonel, who turns out to be the commander, strolls up to me and Alberto. His hair plastered to his head by sweat and his gold front teeth gleaming in the sun, the colonel spends the next ten minutes reaming out Alberto for taking pictures without his permission. He leaves me alone; I assume he thinks I'm just another idiotic gringo thrill-seeker taking pictures of their drug war, and I decide to keep my mouth shut.

Finally, we slink off. Alberto's Latin feathers have been ruffled by El Jefe's dressing down. "Let's get out of here, man," he says. I couldn't agree more. I want to have lunch first, though, and I persuade him to go to the mess hall. Peruvian policemen sit at one table, and the DEA agents and other gringos are scattered around the other two. As I'm eating my chicken, wondering whether I should've gotten that extra hepatitis shot before I left Boston, I notice El Jefe swaggering in. He gives us a look of utter contempt, and Alberto and I agree that it's probably best to skip dessert and head for the landing strip.

Three hours later, we're back in Lima drinking Cristal, an excellent Peruvian lager. Still, it's not a very festive occasion. Lima seems grimmer than ever, and Alberto is still fuming about El Jefe's attack on his manhood. Eventually, mellowed by the Cristal, he grows more philosophical. "You know, the police raise hell about taking pictures," Alberto says, "but they say nothing about me carrying my submachine gun up at Santa Lucia." □

[2] Although they've mentioned it occasionally in their publications, Greenpeace is largely silent about the devastating effect of the coca trade on the Huallaga River—which is effectively dead, according to a study done by Buenaventura Marcelo of Peru's National Agrarian University.

[3] During the attack, the police didn't even bother to call the army—the two institutions hate each other intensely, and the army has made it clear that they won't risk their necks to save policemen.

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Micah Morrison

A HOUSE OF GHOSTS

Even if Saddam Hussein fails to get his way, Kuwait as it existed before August 2 is lost forever. Widespread torture and executions have sent as much as two-thirds of its population fleeing abroad, and a disorganized resistance leaves Saddam some interesting options.

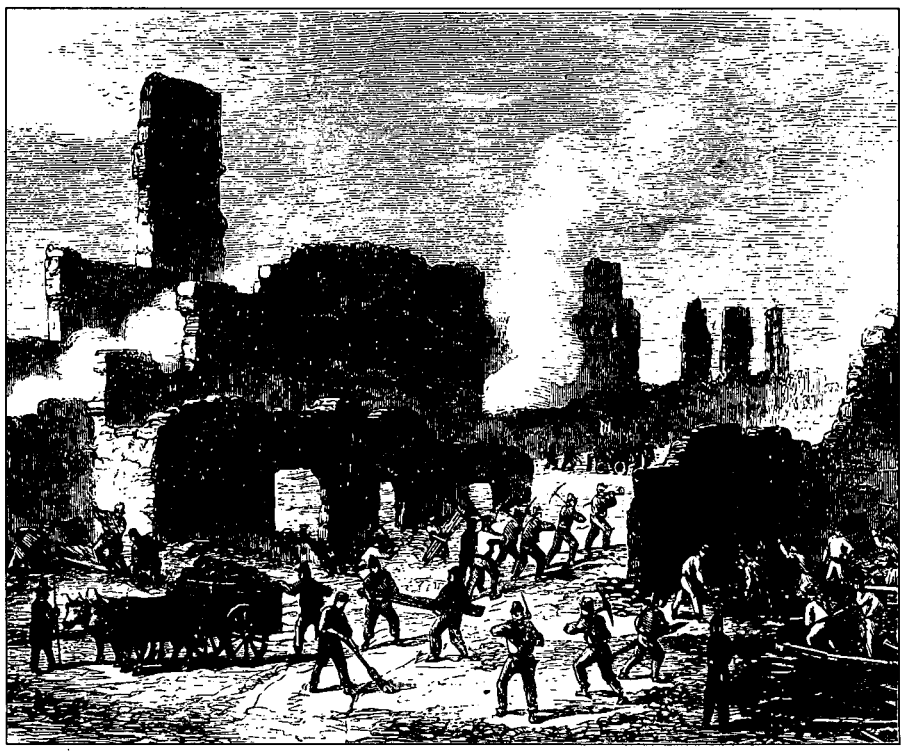
After a few days, she summoned up her courage and went to the Iraqi military post, Kuwait City's former Salymah Police Station, looking for her son. The rape stories frightened her. The rumors of people never returning from the building frightened her. But her son was missing, and the reports of children being taken to concentration camps in Iraq were torturing her, so she went to the station to inquire. The Iraqi soldiers there knew nothing of him. All inquiries should be forwarded to Baghdad, she was told. Almost as an afterthought, the soldier at the desk waved her on to a room at the end of the hall. She walked down the long hall and opened the door. None of the three boys were hers but they belonged to somebody, and now they were hanging from a beam, their testicles cut off.

Like many of the stories emerging from Kuwait these days, this one is difficult to corroborate, though it has a tragic ring of truth. Witnesses insist on anonymity to protect family and friends still in the country, but as the exiles spread out around the globe and fragmentary bulletins emerge from the resistance inside Kuwait, testimony of vast Iraqi human-rights abuses is emerging. In October, after interviewing scores of refugees in the region, Amnesty International charged that "a horrifying picture of widespread arrests, torture under interrogation, summary executions and mass extrajudicial killings" is now the reality in Province No. 19, formerly known as Kuwait. My interviews with Kuwaiti exiles, U.S. government officials, and Mideast analysts confirm Amnesty's charges.

The Iraqi dictator is a blood-soaked Big Brother. Both the Amnesty document and my interviews contain allegations that people have been arrested and even murdered for failing to replace photographs of the Emir of Kuwait with those of Saddam Hussein. The Iraqis are attempting to erase Kuwait's identity, carrying off public records and renaming streets, hospitals, police stations, schools, museums. Public buildings have been turned into detention centers. Possession of opposition literature or the Kuwaiti flag is treated as a capital offense. The Amnesty report notes, "Iraqi military and intelligence routinely torture detainees. Some have been given electric shocks or suffered prolonged beatings to sensitive parts of their bodies. Others have had limbs broken, their hair plucked out with pincers, their finger- and toenails pulled out, and were threatened with sexual assault or execution."

Executions seem widespread. Doctors who have fled Kuwait report Iraqi soldiers bringing in dozens of bodies of young men, many shot at close range in the head or heart. The doctors were forced to issue death certificates saying the boys had died after being admitted to the hospital. Mr. L., a Kuwaiti citizen with contacts in the resistance, told me of a teenage boy he knew well. The boy was seized by the Iraqi military and tortured, not breaking until both his ears were cut off. The boy then revealed the names of fifteen of his young allies, many of whom did no more than paint out street signs and tear down portraits of Saddam. Within a week, all fifteen had been captured and executed.

"They destroy everything, everything," said Mrs. Q., a Kuwaiti exile. "Saddam Hussein is stripping our country. He kills and kills. Children. Women. He has stolen medical equipment from our hospitals, even our street lights and school desks. Why are they doing this? Iraq is not a poor country. . . . " She pauses and her mind goes back to those she left behind in Kuwait. Her back straightens and her eyes glitter with pride and sorrow. "But still he destroys—the zoo, our Islamic Cultural Museum with its priceless artifacts, even our children's Entertainment Garden—like your Disneyland. It is all destroyed and taken away. They say that Kuwait now, it is a house of ghosts."



Some of the ghosts are fighting back. The Kuwaiti army buckled before the initial Iraqi surge across the border on August 2, but made a stand around Kuwait City. Fighting was fierce, though brief. According to Mr. L., as the city fell all military planes were ordered out of the country and the army was told to go underground. Some Mideast analysts and U.S. officials are skeptical about reports of widespread resistance, however. "The Kuwaitis were sort of a playboy army," a State Department analyst said. "They never had a reputation for toughness, like the Iraqis and the Syrians, or for professionalism, like the Israelis and Jordanians. Most of them probably headed for Saudi Arabia and are attempting to regroup there." Unconfirmed reports of U.S. Special Forces teams working with Kuwaitis in Saudi Arabia support this line of thinking, as does the lack of much direct evidence of resistance activities—photographs, videotapes, eyewitness reports—beyond the first few weeks of the occupation.

Still, a few facts may be pieced together. The size of the resistance is not known and probably exaggerated by the Cairo-based Kuwaiti media—the source of much Western information—in the interest of keeping up morale. Yet what resistance there is in Kuwait has exhibited a jaunty *savoir-faire* in the face of brutal suppression. They are said to communicate over cellular telephones. In one story making the rounds, the resistance bought a tank from an Iraqi deserter for about $500. Unable to drive the thing off and hide it, they blew it up. Largely made up of scattered bands of teenagers, and led by a few individuals with military training, the resistance initially drove around running over lone Iraqi soldiers and removing street signs to confuse the occupying army. Firebomb and sniper attacks also have been reported. The at-

Micah Morrison, TAS*'s roving correspondent, will report next month from Saudi Arabia.*

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THE BLEATING FIVE

On April 12, five U.S. senators—Republicans Robert Dole of Kansas, Alan Simpson of Wyoming, James McClure of Idaho, Frank Murkowski of Alaska; and Democrat Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio—met with Saddam Hussein in the Iraqi city of Mosul. Washington's Mideast efforts at the time were focused on a complex set of maneuvers designed to pressure an unwilling Israel into negotiations with the Palestinians and the PLO. In Iraq, Saddam had recently executed a British journalist on espionage charges, threatened to "scorch half of Israel" with poison gas, and was embroiled in international controversy over his attempts to develop chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. The U.S. House of Representatives began to debate sanctions against Iraq; the White House was not pleased. Following are excerpts of the conversation between the Iraqi dictator and the U.S. senators. Saddam was particularly incensed about media reports concerning the above topics and the sanctions threat. The entire conversation was recorded in the April 17, 1990, Middle East log of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

"The Arab Nation " and the Sanctions Campaign

Saddam Hussein: The Arabs are composed of states, but they are one nation and one Arab mind affects another Arab mind, not only because they speak the same language, but because they have the same soul. . . . This should be taken into account, not in order to be destroyed and to be worked against, but to be understood with the aim of building firm bridges in ties between the Arab nation and the states and nations that seek good relations with the Arabs. Therefore, we are aware that a large-scale campaign is being launched against us from the United States and Europe.

Senator Dole: Not from President Bush. Yesterday he told me he does not support this. . . .

Saddam: It is said that Iraq has threatened Israel, although the speech is clear and is translated into English. The speech says, in light of perception and conviction, that this campaign is intended to create the psychological, media, and political cover for Israel to attack us in the way it did in 1981, though this one is harsher.

Dole: Once more, I want to assert the U.S. Government is not the cause of the campaign.

Saddam: Anyway, it is taking place in the United States.

Dole: Mr. President, we condemned the Israeli attack in 1981.

The Zionist Conspiracy

Saddam: Arabs hear affronts and insults directed against them every day. Why? Has the control of the Zionist trend over you reached the extent that it deprives you of your humanity? Has patriotism in those countries become so weak that they are no longer able to say what is right and what is wrong? Is this the price for the electoral campaigns and the influence of the Zionist lobby on the outcome of those elections? If this is the case, then we—not trying to boast about anything, but to express our responsibility—believe Arabs have an extra task, not only to liberate themselves, but also to liberate certain dark corners from the extortion of the Zionist lobby.

Those Pesky Reporters

Dole: There are basic differences between our two countries. We have a free media in the United States. When Your Excellency pronounces the word *Western*, I do not know if you mean the government. There was one person who was not authorized to say anything about the government. He was a commentator for the VOA,[1] which represents only the government. That person was fired. Please let me tell you, only twelve hours ago, President Bush declared to me that he wants better relations and that the U.S. Government wants better relations with Iraq. Your Excellency the President, we might better understand if we saw people. We believe, as leaders in the U.S. Congress, that Congress does not represent Bush or the government. I assume Bush will object to the sanctions. He may veto them, unless something provocative occurs.

The U.S. Ambassador: As an American ambassador, I can confirm that this is the U.S. Government policy.

Senator Simpson: I believe your problem is with the Western media, not with the U.S. government, because you are isolated from the media and the press. The press is spoiled and conceited. All the journalists consider themselves brilliant political scientists. They do not want to see anything succeeding or achieving its objectives. My advice is that you allow those bastards to come here and see things for themselves.

Saddam: They are welcome. . . .

Dole: There is something I would like to say, since you have invited reporters to come here. Why don't you ask them to go to the place where they claim biological weapons are produced? Challenge them to prove you are not speaking the truth.

Saddam: I assure you we will lose nothing if we ask them where the biological weapons are and also ask them to lead us to them. But we know these media organs as you do. They are like a spoiled child. If this child is given a sweet in response to his desires and cries, he will continue to cry all the time.

Dole: The media have a role to play, and I don't think the media are wrong all the time.

Saddam: Neither are they always right.

Dole: I always say they are wrong all the time, especially given that they attack me. . . .

Peace in Our Time

Saddam: Don't I know the meaning of wars and their atrocities! Are we seeking wars and tragedies? We want peace. . . . We do not have the desire or intention of attacking anyone. . . .

Dole: We also understand Iraq's importance in the peace process, although you are not the main party. When we talk about peace in the region, we mean peace for all countries in the region. . . . The point I want to make is that I can appreciate your feelings about the importance of providing a means of defense for yourselves. However, the world is viewing the development of mass destruction weapons with the feeling they mean an increased threat to mankind. . . .

Senator Murkowski: An attempt is now being made in Israel to form a new government. It seems there is a golden opportunity now. In our discussions with all the heads of state in the region, they expressed their firm conviction there is a favorable opportunity. . . .

Senator Metzenbaum: Your Excellency the President, you are portrayed in the Western media in a very negative way. I am not the right person to be your public relations man. . . . After listening to you for about an hour, I realized you are a strong and intelligent man, and that you want peace. . . .

Senator McClure: We have fairly reached the conclusion that an opportunity exists for a peaceful solution and a settlement of the Middle East problem, that the realization of the settlement is possible, and that your assurances today increase our commitment to conveying these things to Israel. . . .

Saddam: I am very pleased. I wish you success.

—*M.M.*

[1]The Voice of America had recently broadcast a commentary critical of Saddam Hussein, among other dictators.

tacks usually come at night and are directed at Iraqi outposts in former police stations. To counter the attacks, the Iraqis arrest a hundred people each night, place them in jails as shields, and release them in the morning.

The resistance appears to be protecting foreigners hiding in Kuwait. When Saddam Hussein announced that anyone sheltering a foreigner would be executed, the resistance spread the word that anyone *turning in* a foreigner would be shot. Early in the occupation, the Iraqis marked the houses of foreigners with red paint and painted those of Kuwaitis black. That night, the resistance painted over all the red paint with black. Such actions are not without cost. Mr. L. has firsthand knowledge of a young Kuwaiti who was stopped at a checkpoint. A can of black spray paint was found in his car. He was shot on the spot and his body was dumped in his parents' front yard.

In the early days of the invasion, the Iraqis behaved "politely" in Kuwait City, said Mr. L. But as the resistance disrupted the occupation, the army began to take out its wrath on the people, chiefly by street executions, looting, and raping the Egyptian, Bangladeshi, and Filipino women still working in Kuwait as domestic servants. Refugees who have survived Iraqi torture and made it out of the country report that their inquisitors demand the names of Kuwaiti police officers, military personnel, and diplomats, believing them to be the leaders of the resistance. Other refugees say the resistance is led by civilians, and that the bands are not in contact with each other.

My favorite resistance story, perhaps apocryphal, concerns a young Kuwaiti with a trunk full of machine guns. Stopped at an Iraqi checkpoint, he began to complain bitterly about "being stopped again" so soon. What, asked the Iraqi officer, was he talking about? There was no other checkpoint in the area. Not true, the Kuwaiti replied. Only half a mile down the road he had just been stopped by an American patrol. The Iraqi barked out some orders and the entire checkpoint jumped into their jeeps and drove off in the opposite direction.

It seems everyone in Kuwait is waiting for the Americans. That is, everyone who is left. The Iraqi invasion has displaced over 800,000 people, creating a massive and complex refugee problem. Half a million Saudis, Egyptians, Jordanians, Palestinians, Yemenis, and Syrians fled Iraq and Kuwait in the early weeks of the invasion, putting new pressure on already-strained local economies (except for the Saudi economy, which can handle the burden). Two hundred thousand native-born Ku-

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waitis, roughly one-third of the native-born population, escaped the country and are now in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, Cairo, and London. The deep pockets of the exiled Kuwaiti government will ensure that these people will not suffer harsh deprivation. Less fortunate are the roughly 150,000 Asian refugees—from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Philippines, and elsewhere—who worked as domestic servants and laborers in Kuwait. Driven from their homes with no money and few possessions, fleeing mainly to barren camps in Jordan, they became "hostages of the desert," as one relief official put it.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees reported that two months after the invasion there were still more than 75,000 non-native Kuwaiti refugees, most of them Asians, in ill-staffed camps in Jordan. Approximately 60,000 refugees crossed into Syria, 40,000 into Turkey, and 20,000 into Iran. Repatriation efforts are proceeding at a snail's pace. The Iranian situation is of particular concern to refugee organizations. If Baghdad succeeds in patching relations with Tehran, the new refugees, as well as the half-million refugees from the Iran-Iraq war, including 90,000 Iraqi Kurds, may be forcibly repatriated.

The Palestinian factor adds another element of uncertainty to the standoff over Kuwait. Prior to the Iraqi invasion about 300,000 Palestinians worked in Kuwait, and many are thought to have decamped for other parts of the Arab world. Although the Israelis have been asked by Washington to keep a low profile in the crisis, and generally have complied, in October they gave an unusual briefing on the Kuwaiti refugee dilemma and the Palestinian aspect. Israeli intelligence claims that roughly two-thirds of the native-born Kuwaiti population—not the one-third of Western estimates—have fled the country, and that hundreds of thousands of Jordanians and Palestinians are being brought, or invited back, to Kuwait. In other words, there are only about 200,000 Kuwaitis left in Kuwait. Independent reports from journalists and refugee officials on the Jordan-Iraq border confirm that Palestinians are flocking into Iraq and Kuwait. Some observers are calling this "the Palestinian scenario." Having driven out the majority of Kuwaitis and looted the country, Saddam would repopulate it with Iraqis and Palestinians, declare Kuwait a "temporary homeland" for the Palestinians—driving a wedge between America and its Arab allies—and call for a "democratic election" to consolidate his gains. Saddam would retain his army, along with its chemical, biological, and fast-developing nuclear weaponry. The rape of Kuwait would be complete. □

Lauren Weiner

VIOLINISTAS

What happens when Violeteros play politics with Sandinistas.

The newspapers in Managua are doing what they can to calm tensions: "Sandinista soldier rapes retarded girl!" screams *La Prensa*; "UNO Evangelical assaults young woman!" *El Nuevo Diario* shoots back three days later.

To those who are looking at all, Nicaragua is looking pretty hopeless. Sandinistas and pro-government farmers have been locked in land disputes since the Sandinistas' violent general strike in July, when peasant supporters of the FSLN were mobilized to occupy abandoned lands and "impede the abolition of agrarian reform." Unknown assailants have bombed a pro-government radio transmitter; others burned down a Sandinista one. Plans to "privatize" the economy are stuck. Unemployment has worsened with the demobilization of the contras and the reduction of the Sandinista army. This year's harvest has been disappointing. And the new currency, the gold cordoba, has not alleviated the Greshamite vertigo of the old cordoba, which circulates at well over a million to the dollar. Daniel Ortega has declared a "war on extremism"—that is, paralyzing strikes whenever the Union of National Opposition (UNO) government makes another stab at firing Sandinistas from bloated state payrolls.

The new Nicaragua trades with the United States, a development that was brought home to me as I stood in line at Sandino Airport recently. Ticketholders for a Miami-bound flight had to scramble out of the way when a refrigerated seafood truck drove up and workers loaded boxes of shrimp onto the ticket counter alongside the luggage. Such an eagerness for the Yankee dollar can only stabilize the country when its production increases, but that's not in the cards anytime soon. Beset by wild cost fluctuations, high interest rates, and a politically polarized labor force, the growers say they are in no position to plant ambitiously. Cotton growers will be lucky to equal last year's pathetic planting of 100,000 acres, and coffee farmers ask how they are expected to increase planting when the government offers credit at a usurious 140,000 cordobas to the dollar.

Retailers suffer as well. "There was a lot of enthusiasm to invest when the new government came in, but not after these strikes," says Enrique Deshon, manager of a Managua Hyundai dealership. Inflation, at 64 percent in July, fell in August, but not enough to affect sales. Back in February, when the Sandinistas lost the election, Deshon was selling thirty cars a month; now he is lucky to sell ten. One reason is that people are less able to afford gasoline, since the government's removal of subsidies caused a price rise of 65 cents a gallon.

If and when the car market improves, one person in a position to take advantage will be the former president. Between Violeta Chamorro's election and her inauguration, Daniel Ortega used his "savings" to import hundreds of cars from Japan and Eastern Europe without paying duties, and stands ready to make a killing selling them off. The new Nicaragua's wealthiest entrepreneurs also include Comandante Jaime Wheelock, former minister of agriculture, who is well set up with sugar mills and dairies liberated from the state sector before the change in government.

Sandinista bigshot Herty Lewites is

Lauren Weiner is a reporter on the foreign desk of the Washington Times.

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KEEPING THE FAITH

Harlem

During his tenure as Riverside Cathedral's "minister for peace and justice," the Rev. Erik Kolbell had seen itinerant peacemakers come and go, but none so distinguished as tonight's speaker. "We welcome into this sanctuary a man who dared to challenge an illegitimate authority, and did so armed with nothing more than the simple knowledge that he was right and they were reprehensible." Indeed, added the Rev. Lucius Walker, here was "one of the great teachers of democracy for North America. . . . if only we would listen. . . . I give you . . . the distinguished *Comandante de la Revolucion.*"

There was a spontaneous uproar as Daniel Ortega entered. All two thousand people present whistled, cheered —*¡Viva Ortega! ¡Viva la revolucion!*— or sang. Two particularly forward *solidaristas* even approached for a kiss, stepping right past the security guards surrounding the altar. Another presented a beret bearing the insignia of her cause, the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Movement.

Only Daniel himself could hold back his emotions. There was something almost unsettling in his bearing, something which—if you didn't know Daniel better—you might have mistaken for contempt. Even the aging activist who stood up at collection time waving a check and yelling "*I give a thousand dollars!*" got only a polite half-smile.

The Rev. Erik reminded us of all the other "friends of the poor and oppressed" who were here "in spirit," including Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, and the persecuted Puerto Rican nationalists cruelly jailed four decades ago merely for unloading a machine gun from the visitors' gallery in the House of Representatives. As another treat, this very night we were joined by our friends the distinguished U.N. ambassadors from Cuba and Vietnam, who graciously rose on request to accept applause all around. No "friend of the poor and oppressed" was passed over, except the One in whose house we were gathered—but, well, the speeches *were* running on, and a few names had to be cut.

Then came a tape-recorded progress report from Brian Willson on the "peace caravan" bringing supplies to the Sandinistas in Managua. You may recall Brian. He's the inspired young man who "1,077 days ago" unsuccessfully tried—with his legs—to stop a train carrying nuclear weapons from a California naval base. Brian announced that the caravan had made it. "The caravan made it!" others shouted triumphantly. It was unclear just who or what would have prevented the caravan from "making it," but, in any case, Brian and the others had eluded them all, and would soon be distributing supplies to progressive churches and hospitals. Just what a "progressive hospital" might be, or what would befall a sick person who showed up at a reactionary hospital, were questions best left for another day.

Finally, the moment arrived and *el Comandante* rose to the pulpit: "Democracy should not be limited to the casting of a ballot," he declared. Hence, "Revolution must continue from below." And: "The question is *how* to build socialism," since "Eastern Europe is in no way comparable to Latin America." "The day humanity no longer lives for its utopias is the day humanity no longer exists."

There followed a question-and-answer period "to which Daniel has graciously consented." Here was our chance to ask the tough questions—respectfully, of course. You could feel a tension in the room: Might one of the fifty or so people waiting at the microphone be a troublemaker? Would an otherwise splendid evening be marred by a question about irregularities in last February's elections? Or about the media's lies that Daniel is living in a confiscated mansion and making a killing on imported cars by pocketing the taxes on them? Or about teenage boys being tortured under internment? Or about the mass graves at former Sandinista "sanctuaries" that are now being dug up almost daily?

Thankfully, all comported themselves admirably. "*Comandante,*" asked one, "how can the revolution be preserved despite the criminal power of the U.S.?" Another: "*Comandante,* how can we deal with the disinformation and/or lies about Nicaragua in the U.S. media?" A third began: "As an activist in the anti-imperialist struggle . . . " And so on.

As the Teacher departed, one of our beautiful utopians, a woman of about fifty, began scolding an over-eager cameraman who had stepped up on a pew for a better angle: "Don't you know this is a *church*!" It was not a pleasant moment, but the clod had it coming.

—*Matthew Scully*

(Mr. Scully is assistant literary editor of National Review.)

even planning to start a commercial airline, Central American Airlines, though it is hard to see how it will get off the ground if Lewites uses traditionally bad Sandinista management techniques, like providing legions of one's pals in the party with no-heavy-lifting jobs. But to judge from Editorial Nueva Nicaragua (ENN), the country's only book publisher, the Front is not incapable of making hard-headed business decisions. Rosario Murillo, Daniel Ortega's common-law wife, who was a *de facto* chief at the firm when it belonged to the Ministry of Culture and continues to run it today, made the staff leaner and meaner this summer, laying off over half the employees. For some reason, the fired ENN employees got zero support from the Sandinista labor leaders of July's general strike, but President Chamorro's *La Prensa* cynically piped up on their behalf.

UNO officials now dominate the television airwaves, presenting hour-long seminars on the virtues of the free market—virtues the Sandinistas were suddenly converted to when their ouster became a *fait accompli.* They partially privatized the television station before leaving power, allowing them to rent a nightly half-hour for their own news program. They also own countless radio outlets and plan to establish a private competitor to the state television channel.

Private sector leaders and rightish members of Chamorro's fourteen-party UNO coalition are chafing at her conciliation with the Sandinistas, typified by *concertacion,* a series of negotiations in which the government will submit its austerity measures to labor and business interests. If the Sandinista unions can be persuaded to attend, that is. They walked out of the first *concertacion* meeting in September, and Sandinista mobs vandalized the cars of nine foreign diplomats in attendance, as well as that of Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo. Chamorro supporters say *concertacion* is necessary to pry state holdings out of Sandinista hands, and to dissuade them from striking. After all, other countries attempting to switch to the free market, like Brazil, are holding the same tripartite negotiations. Elements of UNO and the private sector say that, as formal talks hobble along, the real *concertacion* has been going on without them—that it is a blind for power-sharing with the Sandinistas.

Vice President Virgilio Godoy, the prickly ex-Sandinista labor minister, has surprised Nicaraguan conservatives by assigning himself the role of bad cop. The private sector was furious when he was chosen for the vice-presidential slot, but he has proved to be the point man against the *blandengue* (wimpy) tendencies of Chamorro and her son-in-law and chief adviser Antonio Lacayo. Godoy went freelance during the July strike, forming *ad hoc* National Salvation committees to defend against a feared Sandinista takeover of the government. Friction between the vice president and president has eased in recent months, but the Sandinistas still accuse him of having his own "right-wing" coup in mind. That has yet to be seen, and the salvation committees have receded from the news since the July strike. But Godoy continues to complain bitterly that Lacayo and his circle have given him no vice-presidential duties, save those of representing Nicaragua in Central America–wide economic and political initiatives.

Whether or not Godoy is a force to be reckoned with, he clearly likes to be provocative. He recently proclaimed support for a party of Cuban exiles in Nicaragua bent on destabilizing Castro. And the good cop/bad cop routine can help the government, as when the *godoyistas* demanded that the Sandinista-controlled Supreme Court be enlarged from seven to fifteen members. Two judges were added in a compromise, and the legislature won a formal share in controlling the size of the court, enabling Chamorro to encroach on Sandinista judicial hegemony without getting her hands dirty.

The Superior Council for Private Enterprise (COSEP) continues to criticize concessions that slow privatization and the return of confiscated property. In exchange for ending the July strike, the Sandinistas won a repeal of Decree 10-90, under which—in order to encourage desperately needed planting—a limited area of state acreage could be rented back for this season only to those who had had their land expropriated. Some 20,000 acres did get rented out before the government pulled the plug, but it was too little to mitigate the setbacks in planting caused by striking farm employees and by exorbitant production costs for farmers.

Edgardo Garcia of the Sandinista-affiliated Farm Workers Association admits what all have long known: that huge tracts of the "Area of Social Property" have been lying fallow for years. Nonetheless, no one is allowed to have the land back, according to the Sandinistas, because (1) it represents the gains of the revolution, and (2) anyone who would claim it must be a Somocista anyway. There is proof of their perfidy, Garcia told a Sandinista agricultural magazine: "Many of these entrepreneurs aren't interested in farming to benefit the vast majority, only in lin-

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ing their own pockets," and the tug of war continues. Garcia's Farm Workers Association has been accused of pushing legal renters off their land, and in at least two cases Sandinista-supported cooperatives near Managua have been taken over by UNO supporters. The government argues that since Decree 10-90 was a temporary measure, scrapping it represented no compromise or loss of face. COSEP leader Rosendo Diaz disagrees. He thinks the repeal sets a bad precedent, telling foreign investors that "they risk losing their money if the government takes it into its head to eliminate this or that law."

The real test of privatization will be Decree 11-90, which permanently returns some lands and other assets confiscated by the Sandinistas. Under threats from the Sandinistas, the government has gone about its implementation gingerly, to the dismay of potential investors. "We're not about to go in if the Nicaraguan nationals themselves can't get their things back," says one U.S. computer executive. He is frustrated that many UNO officials—except for Francisco Mayorga, head of the Central Bank and architect of the country's privatization plan—are playing politics. He gives the example of the pharmaceutical firm Solca, which unlike most confiscated firms did profitable business by selling medicine to Cuba. The new government has been loath to give it back, but UNO leaders say the holdup is due to the fact that the firm's original owner was a Somocista and therefore does not deserve to regain possession of his company.

Only a handful of the three hundred or so confiscated companies have been returned thus far. Government officials explain that there is a shortage of skilled managers to take over privatized firms, making some Sandinistas irreplaceable. The replaceable ones often have the support of Sandinista unions, who threaten work stoppages if a plant's administration is changed.

The computer executive claims that government officials are making privatization deals while bound by what he calls "undercover agreements with the Sandinistas," but refused to explain his suspicions. One Managua lawyer goes so far as to say that the Violeteros who support Chamorro have been in league with the Sandinistas all along; she has dubbed them Violinistas. UNO officials say that in many cases the government does maintain part-ownership of a firm or a share of its profits, as repayment for infrastructural improvements made by the Sandinista government over the last decade. But the U.S. executive counters that a lot of those improvements never got made—Sandinista managers pocketed a good portion of the money intended for the purchase of new equipment. Pre-revolutionary entrepreneurs are paying padded prices to get their companies back, and "unclean ownership conditions" leave them entangled with the state sector.

General Humberto Ortega, the government's most important bridge-builder to the Sandinistas, may or may not have reduced the army from 80,000 to 35,000, as he claims. Antonio Lacayo says he believes the reduction has been achieved, but State Department officials say they cannot confirm it. Lacayo also claims that the Salvadoran FMLN guerrillas, long based in Managua, are permitted only political activity, but two Salvadoran weapons couriers were arrested in Managua in July, and in August a French woman was caught driving a van full of ammunition across the Honduras/El Salvador border.

To those who are looking at all, Nicaragua is looking pretty hopeless.

General Ortega may be called before the legislature's human rights committee to testify on the discovery of mass graves in remote parts of the country, where peasants executed for not cooperating with the Sandinistas have been buried over the past decade. Marta Patricia Baltodano, the human rights investigator who continues to bring the graves to light, has been told by UNO congressmen that a subpoena of Ortega is "in the works." But although more people have been emboldened to come forward about the secret gravesites, Baltodano doubts her investigations will bear fruit, since currently the army is responsible for prosecuting itself. And even if the culprits were identified, the country's new amnesty law—Chamorro's revision of one the Sandinistas granted themselves before leaving power—may extend to such crimes.

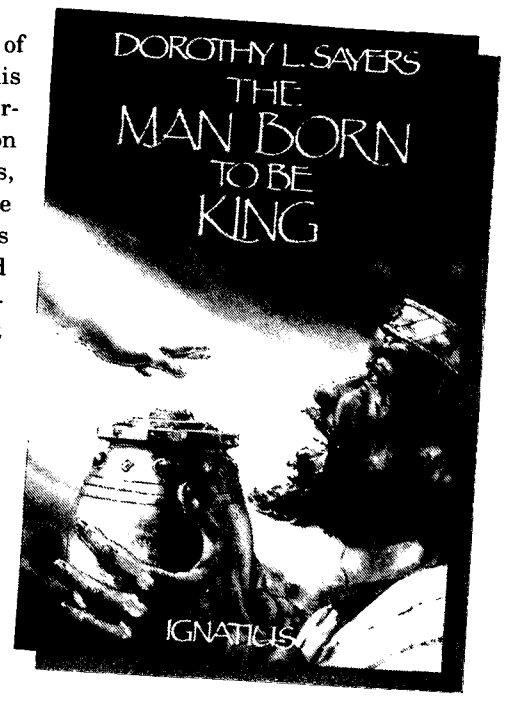
And where do the contras fit in in the new Nicaragua? While some have begun forming a political party in the capital, many resistance members appear to be making a living stealing cattle. In an interview with *Barricada*, the Sandinista daily, contra spokesman Pepe Matus virtually admitted that many contras were continuing a practice that had been, he said, "a necessity of war." About 5,000 are inhabiting the godforsaken development zones the government awarded them to make a new postwar life. The other 10,000 have either returned to their hometowns or attempted illegal land takeovers in the "Areas of Social Property." In one such clash in September in Nueva Segovia department, 150 contras reportedly attacked land defended by 300 cooperative farmers, and four contras and three cooperative members were killed.

Matus has visionary hopes that a "Nicaraguan model" for ending civil war could be established if ex-resistance fighters were to farm alongside ex-Sandinista soldiers. He said the humble of both sides should get together, because the Chamorro administration is not the natural ally of either. Matus, like so many contras an ex-Sandinista, calls the recent strikes "important as an expression of the popular will, against what I consider an oligarchic government."

The contras have long decried the class affinities that exist between the Sandinistas and Chamorro administration elites. Now even the Sandinista rank and file is expressing resentment against the party *nomenklatura*. Fissures between the haves and have-nots became public at a Sandinista assembly meeting after the election defeat, with the lower orders denouncing some leaders for corruption. The Sandinistas' first party congress, to be held in February, promises more fireworks. There is speculation that the voting for new leadership could reshuffle the power structure even as high as the eight-man National Directorate. It is said that the lumpen wing of the party is ready to respond if Comandante Tomas Borge, unenthralled with General Ortega's collaboration with the Chamorro administration, wants another general strike. Ironically, chief among Sandinistas opposed to another strike are General Ortega and the party moguls, whose ill-gotten gains put them on the side of peace and stability. And other stuff that's good for business. □

For Christmas Give the King

One of the most popular of Dorothy Sayers' works, this play-cycle was originally performed very successfully on BBC. Based on the Gospels, and completely faithful to the inspired accounts of Christ's life, Sayers adds unrecorded conversations, minor characters and all the details that give concreteness to the Gospel accounts. She does this in such a realistic and engaging manner that the whole Gospel story comes alive in our midst. Inspiring reading at any time but especially during the Christmas season. A wonderful gift book.



"There is no other word but magnificent for this play drawn from the Gospels. Sayer's interpretation of the characters is simply brilliant. Her Jesus can bring tears to your eyes. You will be deeply moved—a powerful experience."
— Sheldon Vanauken

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BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

TAS's annual Holiday gift suggestions from distinguished readers and writers.

WICK ALLISON

The Mother Tongue: English & How It Got That Way, by Bill Bryson (Morrow). A quirky history of the English language, packed with fascinating tidbits and written with great style. Little is original, but the presentation makes for delightful reading.

Barbarians at the Gate: The Fall of RJR Nabisco, by Bryan Burrough and John Helyar (HarperCollins). Yes, cosmic lessons might be learned by reading this book, but, face it, the fun here is in following presumably intelligent people as they make such boneheaded decisions. An all-nighter.

The Fly Fisher's Reader, by Leonard Wright (Fireside). A collection of the very best of fly-fishing prose from such masters as William Humphrey, Thomas McGuane, Sparse Grey Hackle, and Ernest Hemingway. Humphrey's piece, originally published in *Esquire* as "The Short and Unhappy Sex Life of a Salmon," is a classic of American humor.

Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste, by Thomas Day (Crossroad). The title is wrong. The story is why Catholics won't sing. If you go to Mass in a parish where pop has replaced pomp, you already know: the music is awful. But don't despair. Mr. Day has sounded the trumpet, with a witty and informative and no-holds-barred argument for the restoration of the beautiful and ancient liturgies of the Church. Make this a Christmas present for your pastor. Better yet, for your bishop.

Wick Allison is publisher of National Review.

ROBERT ALTER

Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years* (Princeton University Press). A meticulously researched biography that gives us a clear sense of one of the major figures of modern literature. There is abundant criticism of the fiction, some of it quite fine.

Stanley Burnshaw, *A Stanley Burnshaw Reader* (The University of Georgia Press). An attractive selection of the essays and poetry of one of America's distinguished men of letters. The volume stresses work of the last two decades but goes all the way back to the 1930s.

Robert Fagles (translator), *The Iliad* (Penguin). This is an extraordinary feat of translation. The English manages to convey the compactness, the musculariity, and the rhythmicality of Homer's verse, all in fluent idiomatic language. This should be the inevitable English *Iliad* for a long time to come.

Benjamin Harshav, *The Meaning of Yiddish* (University of California Press). A lucid and illuminating overview of Yiddish as a distinctive cultural system, a rich language, and a vital modern literary tradition.

Alice Monroe, *Friend of My Youth* (Alfred A. Knopf). These stories do an extraordinary job in involving the reader in the fates of their protagonists. Alice Monroe has a subtle perception of the complications of human relationships, and a deep sympathy without sentimentality for the plight of lonely women.

Robert Alter is Class of 1937 Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. His most recent books are The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age *(Simon and Schuster) and* Necessary Angels, *a study of Kafka, Walter Benjamin, and Gershom Scholem, which will be published in the spring of 1991 by Harvard University Press.*

WILLIAM L. ARMSTRONG

I'll be happy to mention some of my current favorite books that might be good holiday gifts: *The People's Religion*, by George Gallup, Jr. and Jim Castelli: a fascinating report of American religious attitudes over the past half century as measured by the Gallup polls.

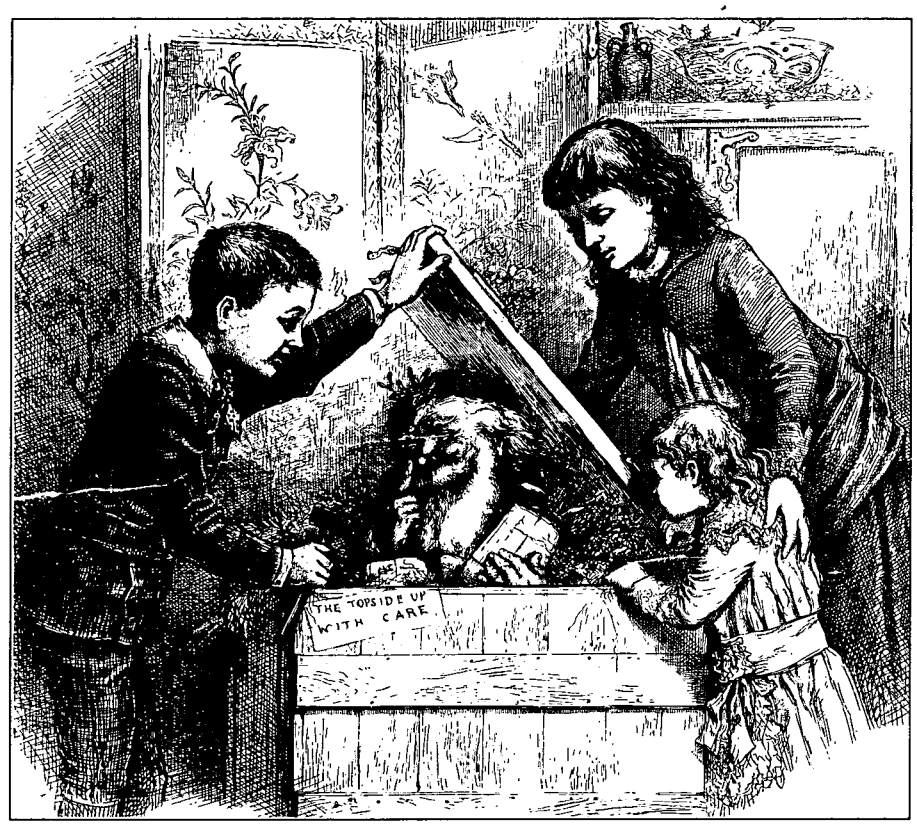
Against the Night, by Chuck Colson: a penetrating and alarming analysis of American culture.

This Present Darkness, by Frank Peretti: an absorbing novel about the struggles between good and evil in a typical American small town.

The Roots of American Order, by Russell Kirk: a dense and provocative classic thoughtful people ought to reread every few years.

Clear and Present Danger, by Tom Clancy: a fast-paced, plausible novel of high-level international intrigue.

William L. Armstrong is a U.S. Senator from Colorado.



JACQUES BARZUN

Daily Life in Ancient Rome by Jerome Carcopino (1940) is a remarkable work; based on inscriptions and objects as well as the great texts, and translated with style. It offers a vivid, kaleidoscopic, and shocking view of Roman life after the Republic. The parallels with our own imperial and decadent condition are many, unfamiliar, and shocking too.

The *Special Report on Criminal Justice* issued by the University of Michigan *Journal of Law Reform* (vol. 22, nos. 3 and 4, 1989) is a large and heavy book which, if you can pick it up, you will not put down. It surveys in full and dispassionately what has latterly happened to criminal justice in this country. Of course, one must enjoy the prose of cases and judicial decisions, while keeping in mind the link between the several constitutional rules at work in law enforcement; but even as a series of

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crime stories the work is enthralling.

Living Philosophies, edited by Clifton Fadiman (Doubleday 1990), brings together thirty-four statements answering to the title description. Being one of the contributors, I say nothing about the quality of the essays. Together they provide a conspectus of current beliefs, some naturally more "belief-able" than others. Among the writers are: Einstein, Theodore Hesburgh, William Buckley, Hans Küng, John Hersey, Mortimer Adler, Alistair Cooke, Robertson Davies, Milovan Djilas, Lewis Thomas, Abba Eban, and Jonas Salk. The original title of the book was *Testament*, which explains the tone of "final message" that pervades some of the best pieces.

Exit, Voice, and Loyalty, by Albert O. Hirschman (1970), is a brief and unusual critique of economics, particularly in its relation to politics and psychology. It is wellwritten, which is to say intelligible outside the specialist guild, and it imparts an outlook that is steadying among the rock and roll of economic prophecies and political nostrums. It is a pity that the three words that make up the title, apt as they are for the analysis presented, should have got by the editor: the library browser is put off—unless his trade is to coach operatic stars.

Paint, Gold, and Blood, by Michael Gilbert (1989), shows a cluster of youths in an English school drifting, from love of adventure, into evildoing—art thievery and worse. For the well-known master of detective fiction, this is something of a departure in the sense that the treatment of the two principals is sympathetic despite a clear moral tone. Nothing is outré, no false heroics, and as usual we are given expert plotting and acute observation in superb narrative prose.

Jacques Barzun's most recent book is The Culture We Deserve *(Wesleyan University Press).*

LYNNE V. CHENEY

The Civil War: An Illustrated History by Geoffrey C. Ward with Ric Burns and Ken Burns. A book of magnificent pictures and wonderful words (many of them from the epic television series), *The Civil War* will provide hours and hours of fascination and instruction.

Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, translated and annotated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (North Point Press). This classic tale of philosophy and faith, guilt and salvation, good and evil, can now be read in a new translation that reflects more accurately than older versions the dazzling virtuosity of Dostoevsky's prose.

Nemesis by Rosamond Smith. For those who love mystery novels, Rosamond Smith (a.k.a. Joyce Carol Oates) provides a satisfyingly well-plotted tale as well as amusingly ironic commentary on those who inhabit the postmodern campus.

Lynne V. Cheney is the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

STEPHEN F. COHEN

Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation*, Expanded Edition (University of California Press, 1991). Many *American Spectator* readers no doubt believe that American might and right produced Gorbachev's radical reforms in the Soviet system. They should read this little book, which argues that fundamental changes in Soviet society since the 1950s led to the political sequel known as Gorbachev's perestroika. I don't fully agree with Lewin's interpretation, but it is far closer to the truth than the triumphalist American outlook.

Sergei Khrushchev, *Khrushchev on Khrushchev* (Little, Brown, 1990), and Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes* (Little, Brown, 1990). Most *American Spectator* readers also probably remember Khrushchev only as the Soviet leader responsible for the Cuban Missile Crisis. He was much more than that in history —the man who led the Soviet Union out of the long nightmare of Stalin's terror and who began the reformation of the Stalinist system now being carried on, perhaps carried out, by Gorbachev. Khrushchev's son Sergei reveals considerable details about the plot that overthrew his father in 1964, and thus much about the men who misruled the Soviet Union until Leonid Brezhnev's death in 1982. The "glasnost tapes" are the third volume of Khrushchev's own memoirs, which are both a unique firsthand account of Soviet history and a powerful case for the importance of his own historical role.

Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution From Above 1928–41* (W. W. Norton, 1990). In the American debate over the Soviet experience, the left sometimes seems to think that Stalin never lived, and the right that he never died. This book is the fullest account and freshest reinterpretation of Stalin and Stalinism, from the onset of forcible collectivization in the late 1920s through the great terror of the 1930s. Few dogmas of the left or the right will survive the evidence and explanations to be found in this masterful scholarly work.

Katrina vanden Heuvel (ed.), *The Nation: 1865–1990* (Thunder's Mouth Press, 1990). I take the liberty of ending on a non-Soviet theme with a modest act of nepotism. If readers of *The American Spectator* believe in the venerable adage about there being two sides to every story, this anthology, edited by my wife on the occasion of the *Nation*'s 125th anniversary, is a book for you.

Stephen F. Cohen is professor of politics and director of the Russian Studies Program at Princeton University. His books include Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A Political Biography 1888-1938; Rethinking the American Experience: Politics and History Since 1917; Sovieticus: American Perceptions and Soviet Realities; *and (with Katrina vanden Heuvel)* Voices of Glasnost: Interviews with Gorbachev's Reformers, *which has just come out from W. W. Norton in paperback.* →

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ROBERT COLES, M.D.

Here are two books I'd recommend:

The Diary of a Country Priest, by Georges Bernanos—a powerful and haunting story of a priest's struggle for faith amid the natural doubts of his humanity.

The Moviegoer, by Walker Percy—an American "existentialist" novel that is meant to address secular readers in such a way that spiritual matters become as important as the familiarly pressing material ones.

Robert Coles, whose books include the five-volume Children of Crisis *series, is research psychiatrist at the Harvard University Health Services and professor of psychiatry and medical humanities at Harvard.*

GEORGE GILDER

Having not written a book for some time, I spent much of the year reading them. It was a lot easier than writing, I can tell you. I have a big pile of them here for you, either to read or to throw.

For example, everyone should carefully study Maggie Gallagher's *Enemies of Eros*, a luminously sage and sensuous account of the collapse of the sexual polarities that make us happy and powerful, fatuous and dutiful, and able to raise children who repeat the polarities, and make the world go down the Laffer curve rather than into Chapter 11 with *Ms.* and *New Woman*.

Then snuggle down on a corrugated carton with your favorite landlord and read Bill Tucker's *Excluded Americans*, a lucid and enraging work on government rent-fixing and other housing scams, including the "homeless" and the predatory socialization of housing by liberal bigots, housing lawyers, and fairness creeps. The creeps, bigots, and lawyers, however, refrained from buying his book (they're hard to please), so if you don't buy it either, *The Excluded Americans* will die and Bill will become a bond tout or something and all New York City will go down the tubes into Grand Central, doubled in no trump.

I know those are full-sized important books that require your entire attention. I also found some fun books. Tom Sowell had another great year making the rest of us look lame and lazy, and I am sure not going to tell you about his recent serious masterpiece on affirmative action around the world; but you might try his latest collection of coruscating columns, *Compassion Versus Guilt*, which is the greatest collection of columns ever published. For a cheap, riotous, recession-year vacation, with no risk from Montezuma, slump on your couch and read P. J. O'Rourke's *Holidays in Hell*, especially "The Revenge of the Euroweenies," which is the funniest, most uproarious, probing, galvanizing, emetic essay I have ever read that was neither written nor published by Bob Tyrrell.

On an airplane to and from the Soviet Union where Montezuma still avenges, I pored through Morris Klein's *Mathematics and the Physical World*, a masterpiece that should be read by all teenagers who think that math and science are dull and hard, while the seventy-five flavors of Ben & Jerry's fruit yogurt Marxism taught at major universities in the guise of liberal arts is worth their time and your money. I also read LeAnne Payne's *Real Presence*, which is the most telling and coherent summing up of the meaning and significance of the great corpus of C. S. Lewis, and I read *Christ Is Passing By*, among several works by Father Jose Escriva, the founder of the redemptive Opus Dei, a rapidly growing global movement often attacked by Catholics for its secrecy and unpopular belief in Catholicism.

I ended the year in the clutches of Petr Beckmann's *Einstein Plus Two* (Golem Press, Boulder, Colorado), which wields Ockham's razor with trenchant effect against Einstein's warped effort to twist time and space into variables and the velocity of light into an absolute. Whenever I had the chance I also orated passages from Tom Bethell's *The Electric Windmill* aloud to guests and other intruders, causing them to seize the book and sulk away to read it, assuring me hours of peace and quiet, interrupted only by an occasional gasp or cackle at Tom's elegant ironisms and deadly aperçus on the foibles of America's establishment of the death-wish left. Then I would sneak off to the snows of Medieval Scandinavia, into the densely realized realm of Sigrid Unset's *Kristin Lavransdatter*, a monumental trilogy which—like every great novel, from *Les Misérables* to *Anna Karenina*—expounds on the imperious presence of God in the world.

Finally, I plunged into Michael Rothschild's *Bionomics*, a pathbreaking critique of conventional economics, adopting a sophisticated biological theory as his economic analogy (big government, for example, emerges as an ordinary, parasitic tapeworm). The negative feedback loops of diminishing returns in equilibrium economics give way to the positive feedback systems of the entrepreneurial learning curve, microchip physics, and Parkinson's parasite.

Tired of reading these estimable right-thinking tomes, you might want to find one to throw. For these cathartic purposes, Harvard's Robert Reich is coming through, just in time for Christmas. The book is called *The Work of Nations*, which rings a bell, and since the work of Reich tintinnabulates in the media, we can expect to encounter widely his form of labor nationalism, holding that U.S.-owned companies operating abroad have no more claim on American loyalty or support than foreign firms that train and pay a U.S. workforce. It's full of contrarian insights and stiletto sharp, so be careful to throw it at a liberal.

I also recommend a lot of other books that I don't have space enough or time to describe without warping woefully the *Spectator*'s patience. So I'm going to go back to writing again, now . . . tomorrow, some year soon . . .

George Gilder is the author, most recently, of Microcosm: The Quantum Revolution in Economics and Technology *(Simon and Schuster).*

BOB HAMELL

Assuming, of course, that *Orthodoxy* is on all shelves:

1. *The Summer Game*, by Roger Angell. In this 1962 book, Angell forefathered *Summer of '49* and *Men at Work*: weighty and still whimsical cerebral study of a game, by a master writer, reporter, and watcher.

2. *May Day*, by Michael R. Beschloss. Just another look back at a poorly reported incident in our history, the book's greatest payoff is the portrait of Eisenhower: not nearly so somnolent, many times more prescient than, say, the rhetoric of the '60 campaign suggested—much as Truman-as-President grew wondrously in stature as the acrimony of his era cooled.

3. *A Bright Shining Lie*, by Neil Sheehan. Tear open the Vietnam scab one more painful time and agonize over one man's view of what could have been, and what was.

4. *The Compleat Practical Joker*, by H. Allen Smith. Or, *Life in a Putty Knife Factory*, or *Low Man on a Totem Pole*. Or, any of twenty others by a now-gone artist from an era when funny lines weren't always acid-based, though he zings at an operatic level—Metropolitan, not Grand Ole.

5. *Montaigne's Essays*. The George Will of Shakespeare's era touched as many bases perceptively as either Mr. Will or Mr. Bill, and handled none better than the art of all three: writing. Among choice examples: "Eloquence that diverts us to itself is unfair to the continent." . . . And, "What I fear most is to surfeit my readers. I would rather irritate them than weary them." . . . And, worthy of being remembered in the Christmas context: "There are more books about books than about any other subject. The world is swarming with commentaries; of authors, there is a great scarcity."

Bob Hamell is the sports editor of the Bloomington (Ind.) Herald-Times.

JESSE HELMS

How about these five?

1. *The Holy Bible.*

2. *How Should We Then Live?* by Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer, now deceased but one of the most remarkable men I ever met.

3. *The Last Lion*, by William Manchester.

4. *Churchill: Speaker of the Century*, by James C. Humes. Yep, I've always been fascinated by Churchill—and Jamie's book is delightful.

5. *A Turtle on a Fencepost*, by Allan C. Emery. Dr. Emery offers some realistic and uncomplicated suggestions about how to live constructively and happily.

Jesse Helms is a U.S. Senator from North Carolina.

SAMUEL HYNES

Frances Donaldson, ed., *Yours, Plum: The Letters of P. G. Wodehouse*. Wodehouse was the twentieth century's most innocent man—so incapable of understanding his world as to be able to convince you that Bertie Wooster was autobiographical—and a sad reminder of what happens when such innocence comes up against reality.

Muriel Spark, *Symposium*. Spark is the most assured English novelist now writing. *Symposium* is short and casual-seeming, but in the end devastating: part social satire and part thriller, a dinner party counterpointed with violent death. Only she could pull it off.

Vaclav Havel, *Living in Truth*. Havel seems to me the spirit of the 1989 revolution—a reminder that it was an uprising not against Communism and *certainly* not for Capitalism, but against ideology. The most important book I've read this year.

James Brady, *The Coldest War*. Korea remains America's forgotten war, ignored by memoirists and by the war-writing industry. Brady's book is a sharp, straightforward account of what that war was like for a young Marine lieutenant—all the brutality and pain and boredom that any ordinary war involves.

Primo Levi, *If This Is a Man: Survival in Auschwitz*. A re-issue of one of the finest accounts of the Holocaust,

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by a scientist who saw and described the horrors of his concentration-camp life with a scientist's objective eye. Like Elie Wiesel, Levi is a necessary writer for our time, an historian of our century's worst crime. He is also a wonderful writer.

Samuel Hynes is the author of Flights of Passage: Reflections of a World War Two Aviator *(Naval Institute/Pocket Books). His new book,* A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture, *will be published by Atheneum in May.*

FLORENCE KING

This was the year I swam with the tide. Some of America's most exalted and politically correct Lit Crits called two new biographies "simply compelling." I called them a swell read but otherwise we stand as one.

The Five of Hearts: An Intimate Portrait of Henry Adams and His Friends, 1880-1918, by Patricia O'Toole, is the seamlessly woven story of Henry and Clover Adams, John and Clara Hay, and bachelor Clarence King, who took to each other with a curious urgency reminiscent of teenagers forming a secret club. What drew them together will surprise nostalgiacs who wish they had lived in the tranquil and uncomplicated nineteenth century: the Five of Hearts were what would today be called a "support group." With the immediacy of a born historian, Patricia O'Toole shows that in their struggles with depression, anxiety, male passivity, female equality, and alienation from the "modern" age, the Five of Hearts were us.

Peter Kurth's *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson* proves that some men really do understand women. Kurth approaches the mysteries of the female mind and heart with the easy confidence of Stefan Zweig, making us sympathize with Thompson even when we feel like strangling her.

So much for new books. At the risk of putting the X back in Christmas, I urge you to find Rosemary Daniell's 1985 mating memoir, *Sleeping With Soldiers: My Search for the Macho Man*. Feminists hated it—need I say more?—because the author found too much chivalry and natural aristocracy in the white working-class male.

As one who ate the Mount Pleasant Branch of the D.C. Public Library between 1941 and 1964, I love several old books for new reasons. Eric Knight's *Lassie Come Home* is not really about a dog, it's about the difference between thoroughbreds and curs. Send a copy to Joe Biden.

Frank Yerby's *The Foxes of Harrow* proves that a black writer can get into the heads of white characters with unerring psychological insight and without a trace of reverse bigotry. Send a copy to Alice Walker.

Katherine by Anya Seton, about the fourteenth-century romance between John of Gaunt and Lady Katherine Swynford, proves that it is possible, entirely possible, for the female mind to construct a logical, coherent plot around historical figures. Send a copy to Danielle Steele.

Florence King is the author of Lump It or Leave It, Reflections in a Jaundiced Eye, *and* Confessions of a Failed Southern Lady. *According to the* New York Times Book Review, *she has "the mouth of a truckdriver and the mind of a Jesuit."*

RITA KLIMOVA

Here are five books I think are wonderful:

1. Timothy Garton Ash: *The Magic Lantern 1989* (Random House). A collection of articles published originally in the *New York Review of Books*, about events in Eastern and Central Europe at the end of 1989.

2. *The Precious Legacy.* A catalogue of a wonderful collection of Jewish objects and art from the State Jewish Museum in Prague, which were on exhibit in many American cities several years ago, but were never seen in Prague.

3. *The Collected Short Stories of A. P. Chekhov.* Wonderful short stories in a very good new translation of this turn-of-the-century Russian writer.

4. Vaclav Havel: *Disturbing the Peace* (Alfred A. Knopf). Czechoslovakia's former playwright, dissident, and now President answers questions by journalist K. Hvížďala about his life and beliefs, long *before* he ever thought he would become President. Very readable, with a wealth of information about life before the "velvet revolution."

5. Robertson Davies: *The Deptford Trilogy* (*Fifth Business*, *The Manticore*, and *World of Wonders*). This Canadian author tells wonderful stories about families—really chronicles of strange and interesting events—since the beginning of the century.

Rita Klimova is Ambassador of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic to the USA.

BOB KNIGHT

The Chip Hilton Series by Clair Bee.

The Art of War by Sun Tzu.

Summer of '49 by David Halberstam.

Grant and Lee by Major General J.F.C. Fuller.

The Edge by Howard E. Ferguson.

Bob Knight is the Basketball Coach at Indiana University.

IRVING KRISTOL

Here are three recommendations. They are all fiction, all twentieth century, are available in paperback, but are not contemporary. I keep meeting people who do not know these works, which I have recently reread. Not one of them has any political significance, which is a blessing.

Muriel Spark, *Memento Mori*—a wonderfully comic-ironic novel of elderly people still caught in the passions of their youth. No nonsense here about "senior citizens."

Sybil Bedford, *A Legacy*—an unforgettable picture of life in the aristocratic, pre-World War I Rhineland.

Isaac Babel, *Collected Stories*—as Lionel Trilling says in his introduction, these are among the very best short stories of the twentieth century. They deal with Jews in Revolutionary Russia—bitter stories, tragic stories, some very funny stories, but not a taint of sentimentality.

Irving Kristol is editor of the Public Interest.

BERNARD LEWIS

David Lodge, *Nice Work*. An entertaining but nevertheless informative novel about the three-cornered struggle between life, literature, and literary criticism.

Penelope Lively, *Moon Tiger*. A superb evocation of the perceptions and recollections of a dying historian, at many levels of professional and personal experience.

Malcolm Bradbury, *Mensonge*. Probably the best and certainly the funniest presentation of current French structuralist and deconstructionist philosophy.

Claude Lanzmann, *Shoah*. The book of the film, retaining its gaunt magnificence and poetic power.

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*. I reread it every two or three years, and never fail to find something new and wonderful.

Bernard Lewis, professor emeritus of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, was the National Endowment for the Humanities' 1990 Jefferson Lecturer in the Humanities.

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE

J. M. Cameron is well known as a Catholic philosopher in whose essays—*Nuclear Catholics and Other Essays* (William B. Eerdmans, 1989)—imagination, insight, and intelligence bring literature and philosophy together, but his poetry has yet to find the readers it deserves. *The Music in the Sadness* (Toronto: Porcupine's Quill, 1988) provides a now rare kind of intellectual pleasure. In Ireland no praise has been too high for Tim Robinson's *Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage* (Penguin Books, 1990), a book which breaks through our conventional categories in its understanding of how geological and botanical landscape, human history and tradition, and the resources of art and memory can all contribute to a relationship with the particularities of place. The mockery of contemporary high culture's pretensions has never been more engagingly carried through than in Saichi Maruya's *Singular Rebellion* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1986), the greatest comic novel since Flann O'Brien and the early Evelyn Waugh.

Alasdair MacIntyre is McMahon-Hank professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame.

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

Chatting with Terry Teachout a while back, I discovered that he, too, observes the most pleasant habit of reading each year W. Jackson Bate's *Samuel Johnson* (Harcourt, Brace). Which makes me look forward all the more to Mr. Teachout's projected biography of H. L. Mencken. Bate's *Johnson* is about as good as the biographer's art gets.

Vaclav Havel's major essays from 1975 to 1985 are collected in *Living in Truth* (Faber and Faber). The essays, notably "The Power of the Powerless," are a bracing instruction in the ideas

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that won the Cold War, and a caution against our taking too much credit. They are the ideas of people in Central and Eastern Europe who simply refused to become habituated to serfdom.

In debates about things Catholic, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger is usually depicted either as the Grand Inquisitor redivivus or as the savior of Christian sanity. On all sides of the debates, surprisingly few people read this remarkable theologian, and that is a shame. *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics* (Crossroad) is, as the title suggests, a wide-ranging collection of essays, and an excellent place to begin to remedy the shame.

The Churches and the Third Reich by Klaus Scholder (two volumes, Fortress) is among the most thorough examinations available of how Christians and church leaders in particular, coped and failed to cope with the rise of Hitler. (The second volume, published posthumously and based on Scholder's notes, is not as strong as the first.)

In *The Altruistic Personality* (Free Press), Samuel and Pearl Oliner present the findings of psycho-sociological studies of those who rescued Jews from the Holocaust. While many of the personal stories are moving, the enormous value of this work is in its definitive debunking of the tendentious theories of Adorno et al. in *The Authoritarian Personality.* It turns out that the thousands of rescuers who risked their lives to save others were typically the kinds of people whom Adorno et al. described as "fascistic" or disposed to authoritarianism. Characteristically, the altruistic personality is a personality shaped by traditional moral beliefs transmitted through religious faith. The Oliner study is of premier importance to the rethinking of moral and ethical formation in our schools.

Richard John Neuhaus is editor in chief of First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life.

RICHARD NIXON

Prospects for Conservatives by Russell Kirk.

Disraeli by André Maurois.

The Coming Soviet Crash by Judy Shelton.

Democracy and the Ethical Life by Claes G. Ryn.

Acts of Recovery by Jeffrey Hart.

Speculations on the Geopolitics of the Gorbachev Era by Walter A. McDougall.

President Nixon's most recent book is In the Arena: A Memoir of Victory, Defeat, and Renewal *(Simon and Schuster).*

T. BOONE PICKENS

The Last Lion: Alone by William Manchester. This second volume of a three-part biography of Winston Churchill is one of my favorites and is a delight for any World War II history buff.

Agents of Influence by Pat Choate. This book reveals how Japan's lobbyists in the United States manipulate America's political and economic system. It should be required reading for all business professionals in corporate America.

In Search of Excellence by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman. This book describes what the excellent company in corporate America looks like, and it is one of the best written management books of all time. It would make a great gift for any up-and-coming entrepreneur.

Dragon by Clive Cussler. This is a novel about the Japanese and their quest for economic domination in the world. Although it's fiction, readers will find the entire novel somewhat startling.

Animalia by Graeme Base. With fourteen grandchildren on my Christmas list, books are always a shoo-in. This is a brilliantly illustrated book that teaches children all about the ABC's and the animal kingdom.

T. Boone Pickens is a Texas oilman and entrepreneur.

NANCY REAGAN

An American Life, by Ronald Reagan. The fascinating story of a young boy from Dixon, Illinois, who worked for a construction company as an 11-12 year old for 25 cents an hour; at fifteen he became a lifeguard to help work his way through college; in college he worked to pay his way, and afterwards finally landed a job as a sports announcer in Iowa. He then became a star in movies, the Governor of California for eight years, and finally President of the United States for eight years. Incredible story.

My Turn, by Nancy Reagan. An honest book answering all the charges that had been made against her for eight years and she didn't feel she could answer at the time; a picture of what life was like at the White House and her relationship with her husband.

The Shell Seekers, by Rosamund Pincher. The author has a marvelous ability to transport you into another world which you don't want to leave.

September, by Rosamund Pincher. She again illustrates the same ability. A rare talent.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, by

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Mark Twain. I don't think any young person should grow up without reading Mark Twain, and Huck Finn is a delightful start.

Nancy Reagan, the former first lady, is the author of My Turn: The Memoirs of Nancy Reagan *(Random House).*

CLINTON SMULLYAN, JR.

Water Music, by T. Coraghessan Boyle. An irresistible force of rich and wildly adventuresome language propels the unlikely protagonist, Mungo Park, on his search for the source of the Niger and for the glory of empire in pre-Victorian London. Boyle has Conrad's ability to force your heartbeat to his rhythm and all your atavistic glands to his enveloping climate.

Wilt, by Tom Sharpe. If you fail to guffaw at Sharpe's ill-mannered, vulgar, underreaching, childish characters, see your doctor immediately. Wilt, an implacably literal professor at a typical British technical college, is the vanishing point of an apparent uxoricide, a *corpus delicti* which undergoes simultaneous sex change and implosion, middle-class conspicuous consumption among the suburban lesbian-rights inactivists, and a riotous assembly of unconfused gasfitters, plumbers, butchers, policemen, academics, and other commoners. The British tradition of savage commentary borne by broad humor is alive and well, and it works: some of Sharpe's earlier efforts got him jailed in and expelled from South Africa.

Travels With Alice, by Calvin Trillin. What sets Trillin, wife Alice, and children apart from, say, de Tocqueville, is a gentle fixation on comestibles and a saucy disregard for greater issues. Other entrancing pursuits include "babyfoot," a game, and the supernal investigation of the sport "Taureaux Piscine."

Flashman, by George MacDonald Fraser. Fraser is a fine historian who takes the unacademic view that his histories ought to be read widely. Harry Flashman, plucked from the pages of *Tom Brown's School Days*, is a drunkard, lecher, coward, and bully thrust into some of the major events of the British nineteenth century.

The Heart of the Matter, by Graham Greene. Published in 1948, it powerfully presents the contradictions of anomie, grace, faith, frailty, disillusionment, disestablishmentarianism, and unoriginal sin that weave through his many masterpieces. Scobie, the policeman protagonist, is one of Greene's most empathetic characters.

Clinton Smullyan, Jr. is a real estate developer, hence, in the current market, a fiction expert.

BENJAMIN J. STEIN

Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, by Edward Gibbon. This is for George Bush and James Baker so they can learn about the limits of power exercised without reason.

The Wealth of Nations, by Adam Smith. This is for Robert Bartley so he can learn about how markets are *really* supposed to work.

Lolita, by Vladimir Nabokov. The greatest novel about love ever written, and the greatest novel about postwar America as well.

The Great Gatsby, by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Simply the best novel about feelings I have ever read, and an extraordinary parable about another era's Michael Milken (if Michael Milken had had feelings).

Governing the $5 Trillion Economy, by Herbert Stein. Basically an extended sermon about reason, social duty, and selfishness in an industrial state. Must reading for every American legislator.

Ben Stein is an economist, lawyer, writer, and actor.

WHIT STILLMAN

How to Become an Assertive Woman: The Key to Self-Fulfillment by Bryna Taubman. A classic of its kind; reminiscent of early Winston Churchill.

Boswell's *Life of Johnson* in the enormous unabridged edition. The ideal bedtime book since any page can be read with interest while there's not much in the way of insomnia-inducing plot.

The Genius of the System, by Eric Schatz. Excellent on how the once (justly) maligned studio system of the old Hollywood turned out so many films which now seem so good. Of course, we don't see many of the duds anymore.

Beyond the Boom, edited by Terry Teachout. Just bought this and it's not exactly a courageous recommendation since nearly all of its fifteen contributors are friends of this magazine; but the first two chapters encountered are terrific: David Brooks's "Portrait of a Washington Policy Wonk" and Richard Vigilante's "The War Against the Yuppies." Favorite page: 103.

Whit Stillman, TAS*'s New York editor, recently wrote and directed the film* Metropolitan.

ERIC UTNE

The Media Monopoly, by Ben H. Bagdikian describes the growing concentration of ownership of America's mainstream media, and reveals the need to seek out other points of view from the largely invisible but nonetheless thriving alternative press. First published in 1983, it was updated and expanded in 1987, and is even more relevant today. Beacon Press, Boston.

Iron John: A Book About Men, by Robert Bly. A new book on the emotional lives of men and the healing power of myth by the granddaddy of the nascent men's movement. Addison-Wesley Publishing, Reading, Massachusetts.

Turtle Talk: Voices for a Sustainable Future, edited by Christopher Plant and Judith Plant. A short course on the current thinking of today's leading environmental activists, visionaries, organizers, and poets. New Society Publishers, Philadelphia.

Rediscovering America's Values, by Frances Moore Lappé. A thought-provoking imagined dialogue between a liberal and a conservative about idealism, social change, and America's true legacy. Lappé is the author of *Diet for a Small Planet* and the founder of the Institute for Food and Development Policy. Ballantine Books, New York.

The Practice of the Wild, by Gary Snyder. Essays by this century's most influential natural philosopher. Use this book to learn how you can become a "native American" fully inhabiting the place you live. North Point Press, Berkeley.

A Pattern Language, by Christopher Alexander et al. The most profoundly conservative yet radical book I know. The authors present an illustrated encyclopedia of the things people love about architecture and what makes them succeed, ranging in scale from small communities to the details of individual houses. A book that both Prince Charles and urban *communards* should love.

Eric Utne is editor-in-chief of the Utne Reader.

(continued on page 54)

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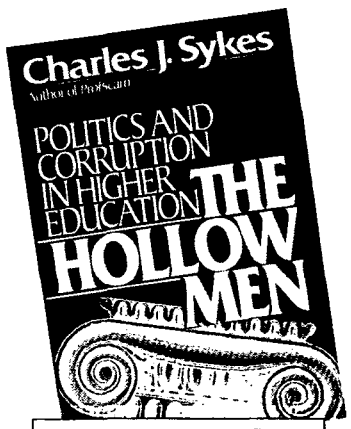

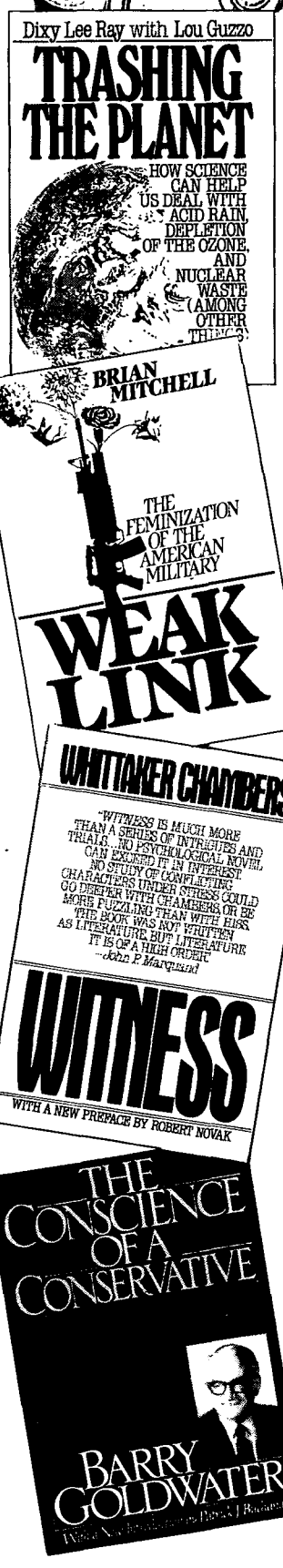
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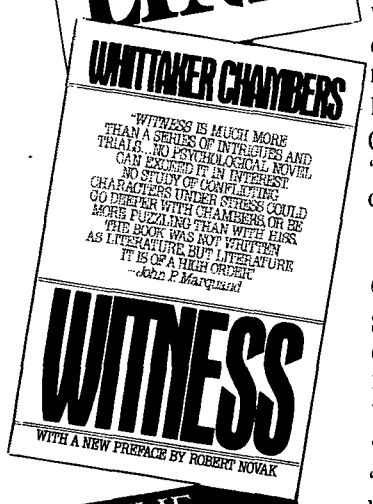

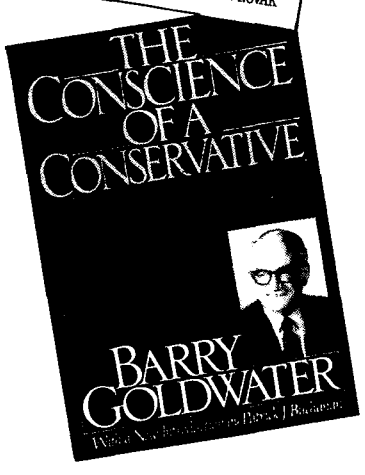

PUBLIC POLICY

The Hollow Men: Politics and Corruption in Higher Education, by Charles Sykes

Charles Sykes exposes the rot in American higher education, using Dartmouth College as a case study.

"Charles Sykes is the Ernie Pyle of academia, and he takes us on a tour of the trenches. Run, don't walk, to buy *The Hollow Men.*" – Jeff Hart

"Very convincingly done. . . Sykes sounds the alarm against current academic abuses with much perception, wit, and skill."
– The Kirkus Reviews

"*The Hollow Men* is a searing indictment." – William Simon

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Trashing the Planet: How Science Can Help Us Deal With Acid Rain, Depletion of the Ozone, and Nuclear Waste (Among other Things), by Dixy Lee Ray and Lou Guzzo

The one book you need to get a sure, common sense grasp on the contentious issues where science and politics overlap.

"A shocking review. . . that should be read by everyone who wants to be an informed voter." – Edward Teller

"One of the outstanding books on environmental issues, a virtual 'must.' "
– Booklist

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Weak Link: The Feminization of the American Military, by Brian Mitchell

The United States now makes greater use of women in its military than any other country in the world. Has this decision been made with the national defense in mind, or is it the result of feminist pressure brought to bear on politically sensitive bureaucrats?

"You read, you converse, you meditate, and you think you know what's going on in the world, when suddenly a new book informs you, not too subtly, what really is going on. Such a book is *Weak Link.*"
– The Dallas Morning News

CONSERVATIVE CLASSICS

Witness, by Whittaker Chambers

Whittaker Chambers' classic autobiography, in which he recounts his difficult childhood, his early work with the Communist Party, his later renunciation of that life, the astounding Hiss/Chambers case, the price he paid for his affiliation with communism, and his discovery of faith.

Chambers' story, now confirmed by KGB defector Oleg Gordievsky, offers "penetrating and terrible insights into America in the early twentieth century." – Arthur Schlessinger, Jr.

•

Ghosts on the Roof, edited by Terry Teachout

Subsequent to his work for the Communist Party, Whittaker Chambers emerged as an editor at *Time,* and spent most of his working life as a journalist. Here are more than 50 short stories, essays, articles, and reviews that cover such diverse figures as Karl Marx, Reinhold Niebuhr, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, and Ayn Rand.

"The world knows Whittaker Chambers best as a philosopher and a hero of liberty. Because of *Ghosts on the Roof,* it will be reminded that he was also a first-rank critic, an incisive stylist, and all in all one of America's greatest journalists." – Richard M. Nixon

•

The Conservative Mind, by Russell Kirk

The classic synthesis of the American conservative tradition and its English roots, with chapters devoted to Edmund Burke, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Sir Walter Scott, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Calhoun, Thomas Babington Macaulay, Alexis de Tocqueville, Benjamin Disraeli, Henry Adams, George Santayana, and many others.

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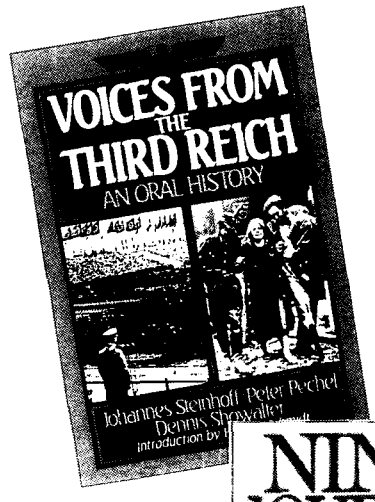

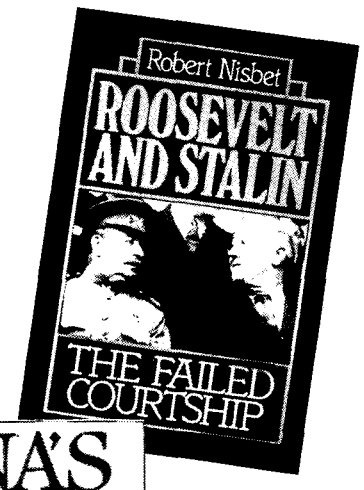

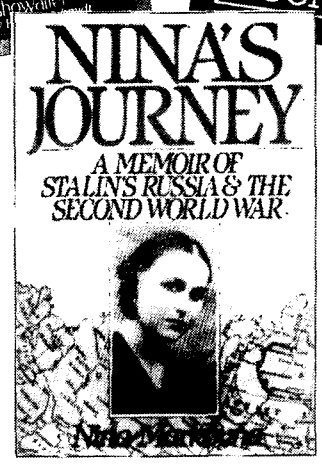

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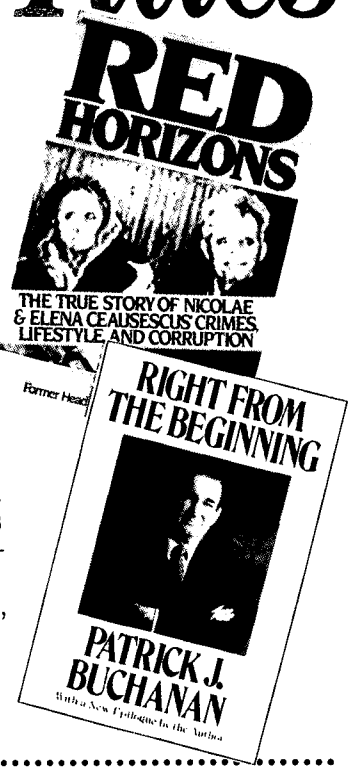
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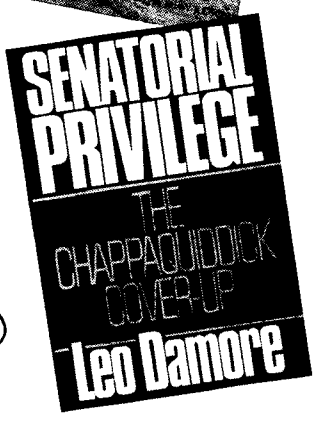

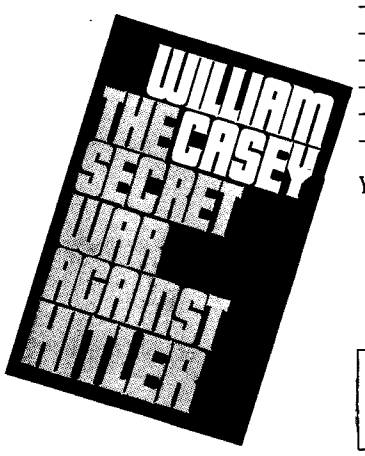

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PAZ IN OUR TIME

by Stephen A. Schwartz

Octavio Paz seems to have taken to heart the words of the Russian dissident pioneer, Yevgeny Zamyatin: "True literature can only exist where it is created not by diligent and trustworthy officials, but by madmen, misfits, heretics, dreamers, rebels, and skeptics. When a writer must be sensible and rigidly orthodox . . . there can only be a paper literature, a newspaper literature, read today and used for wrapping bars of soap tomorrow."

Zamyatin makes clear that, in our era, politics has impoverished rather than ennobled the life of the mind, in literature as in institutional rhetoric. Most of today's writers embrace politics as a public pursuit, but aside from a few hysterical anti-Americans, feminists, and racial pamphleteers, authors tend to eschew it as a subject for creative work. Many recent episodes would have made, in another age, marvelous fodder for novels and essays of self-examination; one such might have derived from the victory of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro in Nicaragua's election of February 1990. The Chamorro election, a disaster for the left comparable to the Hitler-Stalin pact, marked a climax in the recent tragicomedy of morals, political and literary, in our republic. Unfortunately, we can expect few such works from the American intelligentsia.

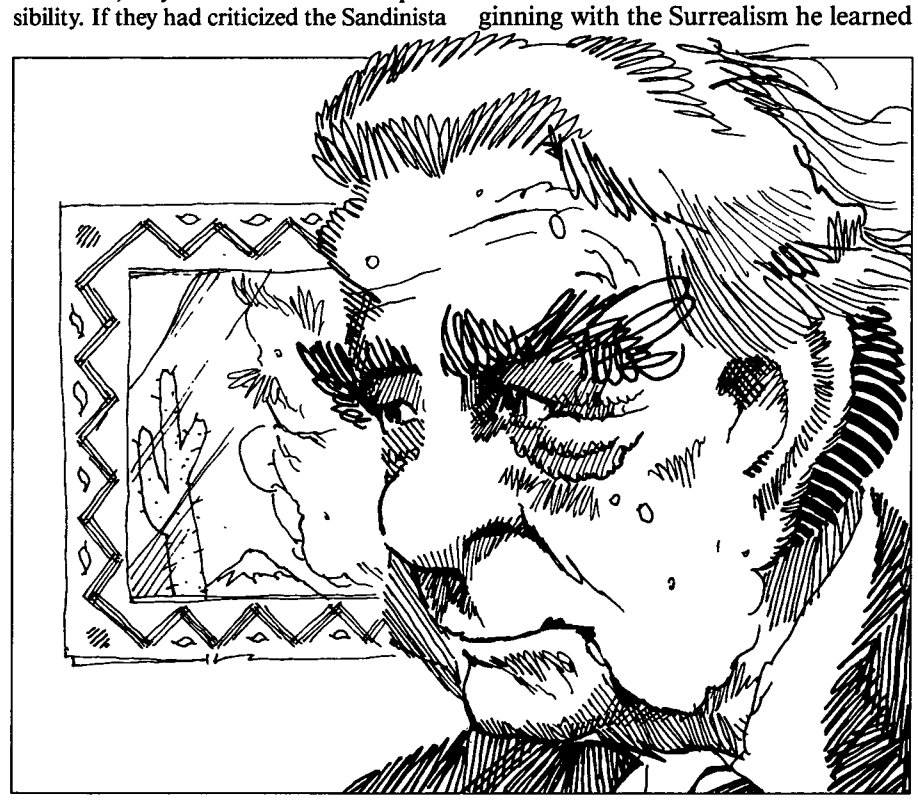
However, for one world literary figure, the Chamorro victory provided an opportunity for serious criticism of left-wing intellectuals both in the U.S. and Latin America. The individual in question was the 1990 Nobel laureate in literature, Mexican poet and critic Octavio Paz. He wrote, "The Nicaraguan election dealt the all-but-final blow to Marxist-Leninist revolution in this hemisphere. It [was] the closing episode of the tumultuous era that began in 1959 with the Cuban Revolution. . . . Thankfully, this part of the world has finally given up Marx for Montesquieu."

Paz has in fact been particularly eloquent on Nicaragua:

> The task . . . of economic reconstruction can be successfully resolved only through broad integration—not only with the rest of Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico, but with the heretofore customarily vilified United States as well. . . . The Sandinista defeat, like the defeat of the Marxist left generally, is the defeat of fantasy. The Communist remedy to social injustice proved worse than the malady. Now our challenge is to find the political imagination to address those injustices that have outlived their untenable solution.

Some weeks after the Chamorro victory, Paz contributed an even more remarkable declaration to the Italian Catholic magazine *30 Giorni*. Asked who he thought was responsible for the human cost of Marxist Leninism's failure in Latin America, Paz said:

> I would start with the Latin American intellectuals; they have an enormous responsibility. If they had criticized the Sandinista revolution while defending it they would have done a greater service. They should have denounced the aberration of compulsory military service which allowed young men, still children, to be taken from their homes; they should have demanded that the opposition be given a fairer chance.



The remarkable transformation of Octavio Paz was, to North Americans, one of the least-known chapters in the political struggle that convulsed Central America during the 1980s. Son of a Mexican revolutionary—Octavio Paz, Sr. was an emissary of General Zapata to the U.S.—Paz was a defender of the Spanish Republic, a long-time associate of Trotskyists and other extremists, and a champion of student protests in 1968. He became a culture hero comparable to the other Latin literary stars, such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Mario Vargas Llosa. Like Vargas Llosa, he ended the decade fully in the anti-revolutionary camp.

It would be hard to find an individual who, better than Paz, exemplifies the Latin American literary experience over the past half-century. Paz established new styles in Spanish poetry, beginning with the Surrealism he learned from the French poets of the 1930s. He has written with wit and understanding about subjects as diverse as classical Hindu sculpture, Marcel Duchamp, and the culture of the Mayans and other indigenous Americans. He was always considered a man of the left.

It could be argued that, although largely neglected by North American observers, Paz's political sea change was as significant a marker of Marxism's end in the Hispanic world as the Chamorro election. But this turn was no less predictable, especially for those who followed Hispanic literary and political events up close, than the anti-Sandinista vote in Nicaragua.

Paz actually broke with the left more than a decade ago, when he recognized the failure of the state as a medium for human happiness, a view elaborated in *El ogro filantropico* ("The Philanthropic Ogre"), published in the late seventies. But his alienation took an increasingly open cast in the middle eighties. He and his widely respected monthly magazine, *Vuelta*, assumed a forward position in defense of free expression in newly revolutionized Nicaragua and oldly revolutionized Cuba.

Vuelta has taken a tone more than a little reminiscent of the anti-Communist liberal periodicals of the 1950s. Aesthetically, it shows a firm commitment to Modernism, with translations of T. S. Eliot and cover reproductions by artists like Max Ernst typically mixing with critical and literary works by leading Hispanic writers. Even in its design, it has repudiated much of Latin American art and literature, which had revived the worst drudgeries of social realism.

At the 1984 Frankfurt Book Fair, Paz served notice on the left in uncompromising terms in a speech on accepting the Peace Prize of the West German Association of Booksellers and Publishers. Paz used the occasion to deliver a thorough condemnation of *sandinismo*: "The acts of the Sandinista regime are proof of its determination to set up in Nicaragua a bureaucratic-military dictatorship following the Havana model." He went on to defend the

---

Stephen A. Schwartz, a writer for the San Francisco Chronicle, *co-authored a portrait of Sen. Alan Cranston in* TAS *(April 1990) under the pen-name Buck Long. His latest book is* Miracle in Managua, *on the election of Violeta Chamorro, to be published in early 1991 by the Institute for Contemporary Studies.*

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opposition, including the contras, of whom he said, "None of them is fighting to restore [Somoza's] dictatorship." In the years that followed, *Vuelta* removed altogether the "bloody shirt" of Latin leftism. Paz consistently defended Chamorro's newspaper *La Prensa* against Sandinista aggression. More polemically but typically, *Vuelta* called novelist and Harvard professor Carlos Fuentes a "fake Mexican" who has fabricated his personality for the entertainment of foreign leftists.

Since Paz emerged in the 1930s, his works have shown a remarkable variety. He began as a leftist, "socially conscious" poet, then moved to Surrealism after several visits to France. He came into his own in the decade following the Second World War, with a series of major works. His collection of surrealist prose, *Eagle or Sun?* (1951), was followed by a group of long, epical poems culminating in *Sun Stone* (1957). In addition, he produced two seminal critical works: *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950), the greatest analysis of the Mexican character, or, for that matter, the Latin American character, ever published, and *The Bow and the Lyre* (1956), which continued his exploration of poetry and poetic language. It is an interesting and unexamined fact that, like Paz, the French surrealist André Breton, a radical in his youth, ended up a fervent anti-Communist and loving defender of the U.S. and its world role after 1945.

But Paz's real masterpiece is his most recent major work, *Sor Juana: Or the Traps of Faith*, published in English in 1988. It is an unusual study of a seventeenth-century Mexican poetess and mystic in which Paz reveals his fascination with the traditional past. The book is encyclopedic in its reach, providing a complete view of the viceroyalty of New Spain.

One might have imagined that such a study of a "person of color" (not to mention a "person of gender") would parrot familiar attacks on Western values and traditions. But Paz has come to reject the neo-Rousseauian outlook, popular on university campuses on both sides of the Rio Grande, that treats pre-Columbian Mexico as a lost paradise, and its Hispanicized successor culture as, in his words, "a vacuum in which nothing of importance occurred . . . the period of the Mexican nation's bondage." As he writes, "Although official [Mexico's] PRI government opinion does not accept it, there are greater affinities between [modern] independent Mexico and New Spain than between them and pre-Hispanic societies."

In New Spain, Paz discovered a pluralistic kingdom equal in rights to the other constituents in the empire, "an enormous land, prosperous and peaceful." Its essential contradiction was "not based on the antagonisms between rich and poor or between subjected natives and European oppressors, as is so often claimed in pseudo-Marxist arguments." It was based on antagonisms between competing factions at the top of society: the Mexican-born of European descent, or *criollos*, vs. the administrators sent from Spain itself. Such is a struggle recapitulated in modern times by competing elites throughout Latin America—the leadership of revolutionary groups has come almost unfailingly from the university-educated bourgeoisie, rather than from the humble peasantry.

While he has been described as anti-clerical, even atheist, Paz's vision of the pluralistic order and its religious underpinnings in post-Columbian Mexico is a fresh one. Along with acceptance of the balance that characterized that society comes a fuller appreciation of the failure of the egalitarian project: "The contradiction that corrodes universalist ideologies and inevitably ends by destroying them is that they do not, in fact, transcend the specific social entities we call nations, classes, peoples, and ethnic and cultural groups." He describes the traditionalist social framework with understated but real sympathy: "New Spain had as its ideal neither change nor the modern consequence of change, the cult of progress. Rather, its ideal was stability and permanence; its vision of perfection was to imitate, on Earth, the eternal order."

Paz has come to see the modern church as a bulwark of pluralism, and in his *30 Giorni* interview he commented: "One cannot profess tolerance and pluralism while simultaneously holding positions which are injurious to an institution [the church] which represents so much in the history and life of Mexicans." In that interview he also declared his love for those aspects of Catholicism that united it with the most profound elements of Mexican existence. "Popular Mexican Catholicism moves me profoundly. It is the source of much popular creativity and also of kindness among individuals."

Paz's obsession with kindness among individuals is yet more notable given its context in current Mexican politics. The church has been the object of strict anti-religious legislation since the revolution. The constitution of 1917 specifically bars priests from appearing in public in religious uniform, and prohibits public religious processions, as well as imposing other curbs. A campaign is now underway to free the church from these bonds, but the anti-clerical tradition remains strong among the Mexican intelligentsia. Paz has forthrightly condemned the maintenance of these laws.

Paz emphasized his commitment to the reintroduction of Catholic culture in the open marketplace of ideas in Mexico with a special issue of *Vuelta* this past May on "The Catholic Tradition and the Mexican Writers." In an interview therein, Paz said, "At one time it was necessary to laicize Mexican political life. Today, no. We must integrate. In Mexico, Catholics are isolated. It was not always thus: our independence had the Jesuits behind it, our liberals had high Catholic interlocutors. . . . The marginalization [of the church] must end. Not by the means envisioned by liberation theologists; rather through the heritage of the theologists of freedom. I am thinking of the Spanish theologists of the sixteenth century." In the same interview, he referred to those "Catholic Marxists who only listen to themselves, like Ernesto Cardenal."

His stance on the church is proof that Paz has undergone a genuine conversion, from an aggressive secularism to a respect for conservative political and spiritual conceptions. It has been commonplace to ascribe such "conversions," on the part of radical intellectuals, to a spiritual void within the individual, and an attempt to fill it. In Paz's case this is clearly not accurate.

Obviously, much of Paz's evolution away from leftist clichés has had to do with the failure of Marxism in improving the conditions of life in the Hispanic world. Less obvious is the persistent, passionate fidelity that he has displayed throughout his life to the freedom of the mind. Octavio Paz has always been impelled by an almost irrational belief in the link between freedom and creativity. It is his belief that, as a writer, his relationship with culture, language, and profession can only be individualistic, and that genuine inspiration is unclassifiable, unexplainable, and resistant to all imposition. His is a position diametrically opposed to that adopted by the Soviets in the 1920s, which hailed the placing of "artists in uniform."

Unlike many modern artists, Paz draws his inspiration not from the Spiritual Void, but from the almost extinct idea of spiritual strength. Perhaps the central theme of intellectual life in the twentieth century has been the quest for reconciliation between freedom of the mind and utopia. Some have recognized almost instinctively that the two could not be reconciled; all the classic utopias, from Plato on, provided for repression of dissenters. For Paz, utopian temptations were strong; there is a paradoxical element in his discovery of intellectual freedom through the pluralistic traditional order of New Spain. It has taken him some decades to work through these contradictions, but he has done so, recognizing in the process that freedom is the highest of values. □

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OUR KINGDOM FOR A DEAL

by Dick Armey

It wasn't supposed to work this way, but as a sequester of federal spending loomed over White House and congressional budget negotiators, Republicans showered their Democrat counterparts with concessions. Yes, the President will abandon his only electoral mandate of "no new taxes" and go along with the second largest tax increase in American history. No, we don't need a preferential capital gains rate to spur economic growth. Yes, you can cut defense spending to the bone while allowing non-defense discretionary spending to continue to grow unabated. No, you don't have to include a line-item veto or enhanced rescission provision in the process reform.

Budget Director Richard Darman was bargaining like Richard III: "A deal, a deal, our kingdom for a deal!" When it was all over, Republican negotiators had signed off on an agreement that was sure to cause long-term damage not only to the economy, but to their party as well.

"Would you please stop calling this 'the President's package,'? " one of the eight House Republicans running against a sitting senator asked White House Chief of Staff John Sununu, who was struggling to sell the summit deal to the House Republican Conference before the vote. "Every time we draw a distinction between us and the tax-and-spend Democrat incumbents, you blur it!" The 1990 summit left the working men and women of America wondering which party wants to raise their taxes more, and Republican candidates know intuitively that any blurring of the tax issue hurts them.

Democrats know it, too. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, which works to elect Democrats to the House of Representatives, began urging its candidates to attack Republicans on taxes. This year it sent a bulletin to candidates saying that "Republicans have spent the last ten years raising taxes and they're still doing it," and that Democrats should demand "the repeal of the unfair taxes that are breaking the backs of the middle class and the poor."

In opposing the budget summit agreement, House Republicans were standing by those who sent them to Congress in hopes of tax relief. Of course, in Washington no good deed goes unpunished, and the White House was quick to join inside-the-Beltway pundits in labeling dissenters "irresponsible." and threatening many with reprisal if they refused to toe the line. If only Republican congressional leaders and White House officials had exerted the same energy on passing good Republican initiatives that they did on this bad Democrat one, we might not have found ourselves engaged in another round of summitry.

In June, freshman Rep. Chuck Douglas (R-N.H.) successfully pushed a vote on the Balanced Budget Amendment to the House floor by threatening to disclose the names of congressmen who had cosponsored the amendment but then hypocritically refused to sign a petition to discharge it from the Judiciary Committee that kept it bottled up. Passage of a Balanced Budget Amendment is one of the most important planks in the Republican party platform, but did the White House lift a finger to help pass it? Did our leadership twist any arms? Did the President go on national television and urge people to contact their congressmen in favor of the amendment? No. The constitutional amendment to balance the budget came within seven votes of the two-thirds majority necessary for it to pass. The summit package lost overwhelmingly despite the full-court press.

This summer, a bipartisan group of House members tried to reform agricultural spending and inject free market notions into federal farm policy. One amendment would have saved over $4 billion by barring individuals with annual adjusted gross incomes of $100,000 or more from receiving subsidies. Did the administration support this measure of fiscal responsibility? No, the night before the floor vote Agriculture Secretary Clayton Yeutter said on national television that the amendment wouldn't work.

Is any federal agency more expendable than the National Endowment for the Arts? Millions of middle class voters see it as a waste of taxes, and find many of the projects it funds to be willfully offensive. Do those of us who challenge this agency's $180 million annual budget get support from the administration or Republican leaders? No. On an issue that perfectly separated the liberal elites from most of the country, President Bush at a press conference equated our actions with censorship, and the administration requested an increase in spending for the agency in FY 1991.

In July, House Republicans passed by a margin of three-to-one a resolution stating unequivocal opposition to tax increases as a means of deficit reduction, yet administration officials and congressional leaders seemed genuinely surprised by this same group's rejection of their tax-laden summit package in October. Who has abandoned whom in this process?

House Republicans were abandoned by their summiteers (with the notable exception of Whip Newt Gingrich) not only on the tax issue, but on the budgetary process itself. A little noted provision makes the 1990 budget summit (the seventh of its kind) the first to perpetuate itself as an institution in federal budgeting. This is bad news to anyone who understands that process is policy, and that bad process means

Rep. Dick Armey (R-Texas) is a member of the House Budget Committee.

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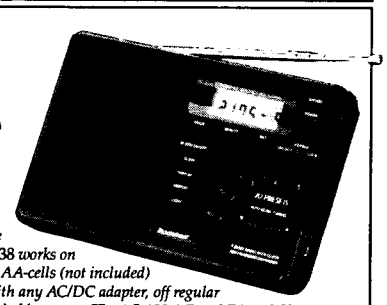

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bad policy. Budget summits have historically worked to the advantage of congressional Democrats and against Republican administrations.

As Darman, Treasury Secretary Brady, and other Republican negotiators focused on "deficit reduction," the Democrats kept their eye on who got the power. According to one summit participant, Senator Robert Byrd (D-W.V.) very early drew a line in the sand when it came to process reform: There would be no line-item veto or enhanced rescission for the President. As chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Byrd simply refused to consider conferring upon the President the power to disrupt the deals he and his colleagues cut in the committee.

Later, Byrd insisted on a provision that requires any tax cutting proposal to receive sixty votes in the Senate before enactment. This "supermajority" clause dooms the prospect of a preferential capital gains rate for the foreseeable future. Had such a provision existed in 1981, Byrd could probably have blocked the Reagan tax cuts.

Another problem with summits is their elevation of congressmen little-known outside their districts to a level equal to that of the presidency. The relatively few Americans outside the suburbs of St. Louis who could identify Dick Gephardt remembered him for his dismal performance in the 1988 Democratic presidential primaries. Yet on September 30, we were treated to the sight of Gephardt standing at a presidential podium in the White House Rose Garden, indicting Ronald Reagan and his policies for our deficits while President Bush looked on. Here are the keys to the bully pulpit, Dick.

Once elevated, Democrats immediately framed the budget negotiations in terms of "fairness," or the politics of income redistribution, from which they derive their power. In dealing in terms of fairness rather than economic growth, Republican negotiators were already at a disadvantage. Little wonder that a *Washington Post* poll taken after the summit showed that only 33 percent felt that when it comes to who's responsible for deficits, Democrats "go too far in keeping costly government services that are wasteful and out-of-date" while 63 percent felt Republicans "go too far in helping the rich and cutting needed government services that benefit average Americans as well as the poor."

Rather than sidestepping the sometimes unpleasant conflict of visions by joining in a budget summit, Republicans would be better served by clashing with the Democrats over taxing and spending priorities. President Bush missed a golden opportunity when on April 15, the one day when most Americans are acutely aware of the cost of government, he did not fault the Democrats for again missing a budget deadline. Had he then pressed for a budget that garnered the support of the moderate-to-conservative Democrats as well as his own party in the House and Senate, we'd either have a decent budget or Americans would at least know who's responsible for the lack of one.

If Byrd and Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Maine) are President Bush's obstacles to progressive economic policies, as he has stated, he could better remove these obstacles by maintaining his pro-growth, no-tax position in support of Republican challengers trying to achieve a Senate majority. Instead, a month before the election, Senator Mitchell used the Democrats' rebuttal to President Bush's speech urging public support for the summit package to emphasize that there was no difference between Republicans and Democrats as they "helped the president to rewrite his budget." This lack of distinction is likely to perpetuate the Democrats' grip on the Senate through at least 1992, and haunt other Republicans—including the President himself—for years to come. □

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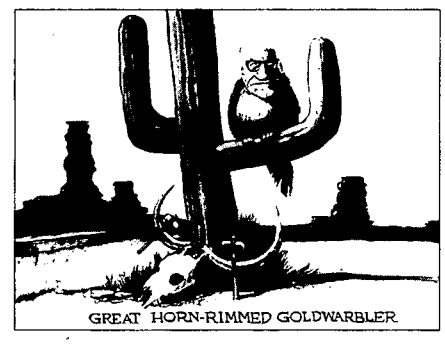

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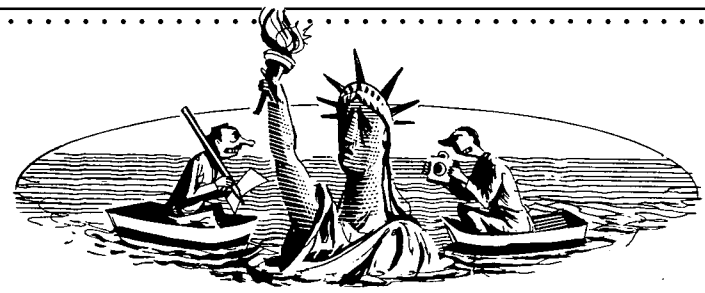

AN AMERICAN ORIGINALIST

by Terry Eastland

Now that David Souter has taken his seat on the Supreme Court, the journalism on his confirmation is ripe for review by your faithful guide to all things media. We begin with Linda Greenhouse of the *New York Times* and her summary piece on Souter's testimony, published in late September. What strikes the eye is her flat statement regarding a central issue in judicial politics today: Souter, she wrote, had "rejected the 'originalist' school of constitutional interpretation."

Is that really what happened? "I do not believe," Souter said during his hearing, that "specific intentionalism is a valid interpretive canon." If you equate "originalism" with "specific intentionalism," as Greenhouse apparently did, you might write what she did. But this hardly does justice to the new justice's view of the matter.

Early in his testimony, Souter said that "the interpretive position that I start with" is "one of original meaning." Souter never deviated from this, well, originalist position, and he explained it so many times as to leave no mistake as to where he stood.

For Souter, the task of the judge in interpreting the Constitution is "to try and find . . . an objective sense of meaning which constrains us and constrains the Republic." This amounts to a historical inquiry, which is to say an inquiry into the *original* constitutional materials—the text itself as well as the intentions of those who framed and ratified it. However, according to Souter, these intentions may or may not be the same as the "objective sense of meaning" that the Constitution expresses. The utility of the framers' intentions, Souter continues, lies in helping a judge discern the *objective* meaning of the Constitution itself. And in applying this meaning, as Souter said on numerous occasions during his testimony, a judge is not to be confined to the specific thoughts of those who enacted the Constitution. Original principles, Souter said repeatedly, may be applied to situations unknown to those who framed and ratified the original Constitution.

Besides Greenhouse, another reporter who botched this aspect of the story was Dawn Weyrich of the *Washington Times*. In a piece on how Souter worried conservatives, Weyrich defined originalism as the approach "favored by conservatives" by which "judges seek only to interpret the Constitution according to the authors' intent." She then reported an accurate quotation from Souter: "My approach to interpretation is not a specific-intent approach." Weyrich's story implied what Greenhouse's made explicit—that Souter was no originalist.

Late in his testimony, Souter had an exchange on "originalism" with Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Penn.) that bears on this issue. Specter tried to say Souter was not an originalist. Souter replied he was "depressed" that the senator would think this way, explaining that "the reason you are reading me out of" originalism is that "you are making the assumption that the only brand of originalism, if you will, . . . is the brand of specific intent. And with respect, I think that . . . is not so. I think the brand of original meaning or original understanding is in fact a valid interpretivist position." Souter might as well have been addressing some of the journalists covering his testimony.

An irony here is that Souter's handlers didn't try to disabuse reporters of the idea that he had rejected originalism. They wanted the Senate to think that Souter was no Robert Bork, who of course is the most famous living advocate of originalism. As it turned out, Souter did differ from Bork both in style of presentation and on substantive issues; most importantly, he pledged allegiance to judicial recognition and enforcement of an unenumerated right of privacy, something Bork did not do as a nominee (and which is now the Senate's litmus test for confirmation to the Court). Still, the two men have certain similarities, perhaps the most important being their view of originalism. One reporter, Terence Mann of the *Legal Times*, saw this clearly.

In an excellent analysis titled "Souter and Bork: Common Ground," Mann noted that Souter's testimony "tended to shy away from the use of the term 'original intent' "—the term used by Bork. But Mann then observed that "Souter is not so far removed from Bork as might at first appear." Mann was the first reporter to go to the trouble of opening Bork's recent best-seller, *The Tempting of America*, to compare the two men. And he pulled this relevant quote: "The search is not for a subjective intention. Lawyers and judges should seek in the Constitution what they seek in other legal texts: the original meaning of the words." Mann could have found similar passages in other Bork writings, some predating his 1987 confirmation defeat. In 1985, for example, Bork wrote that a judge should apply original constitutional principles to "circumstances [the Framers] did not foresee." Bork sounded like Souter, or perhaps I should say Souter sounded like Bork.

The silliest editorial comment on the new justice came from Ray Jenkins of the *Baltimore Sun*. "It logically follows," Jenkins opined, "that if [Souter] would uphold the *Griswold* case, he would also uphold the *Roe* case." But that doesn't "logically" follow. *Griswold* is the 1965 case in which the Court, on the basis of an unenumerated right of privacy, struck down a Connecticut law prohibiting the use of contraceptives. *Roe*, of course, is the 1973 case in which the Court, expanding the privacy right to include abortion, struck down a Texas anti-abortion law. Putting aside Souter's declining to testify whether he accepted the result in *Griswold*, it is quite possible to agree with that case and disagree with *Roe*. And it happens that there is at least one justice who upheld the one but not the other. Ray Jenkins can look it up: Justice Byron White was in the majority in *Griswold* but dissented in *Roe*.

One of the more insightful comments on Souter came from Bruce Fein, who deserves credit for taking on the nominee's oft-repeated testimony to the effect that *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, the Supreme Court's landmark deseg-

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regation decision of 1954, was precipitated by political immobility in other branches of government in addressing racial discrimination. As Fein correctly pointed out in his column in the *Washington Times*, President Truman desegregated the armed forces by executive decree, and both political parties adopted strong civil rights planks in their 1948 platforms. Souter also failed to tell the rest of the story about *Brown*, which reflects no credit on the Supreme Court. Fein usefully provided facts as to how the post-Reconstruction Court had nullified legal guarantees against racial discrimination, thus becoming, as he put it, "complicit in Judge Souter's putative political vacuum that was arresting the quest for racial justice." Fein was the only writer who criticized this quite vulnerable part of Souter's testimony; the fact no one else did testifies to the enduring influence in our political culture of certain myths associated with *Brown*, and indeed of the Supreme Court as the nation's Great Enforcer of civil rights.

The *Wall Street Journal* merits applause for its front-page story titled, "How Nominee Won in His Classic Clash With Capital's Culture." This was the kind of after-the-fact, how-it-happened story that big newspapers (because they have the resources) are doing more and more of these days, and, on the whole, doing well. (Television news, whose patience is limited to sound-bites, doesn't go in for this sort of thing.) The *Journal*'s piece, by David Shribman, reported fascinating tidbits, such as that Judiciary Committee Chairman Biden actually told Souter in advance what his very first question would be (it dealt with the privacy right) and that Souter had turned down the idea of a meeting with the man he was to replace, Justice William Brennan, who had sent the nominee a letter expressing interest in a friendship (Souter's reason: there was no precedent for such).

Finally, two stories that should have been assigned went unreported. First: Souter so frequently compared himself to the second John Harlan that a story on this Eisenhower appointee to the Court—intellectually at least as interesting an Eisenhower appointee as Brennan—fairly begged to be written. Second, Souter so easily dealt with his interrogators on the Judiciary Committee that one had to wonder just how up to the task Biden & Co. really are. I'm still looking for the story on the committee that reports how many questions posed by senators are composed by staff, how many times senators are unable to ask coherent follow-up questions (subtracting those which staffers pass along on slips of paper), how much of a nominee's writings senators have actually read, and so on. I suspect that this is not a story that will make proud the world's most deliberative body.

• • •

One must hope that Justice Souter does not have to hear *Lisa Olson* v. *New England Patriots*, or some other such case. Olson, of course, is the *Boston Herald* sports reporter who accused several Patriots of sexual harassment while she was conducting a post-game interview. Olson's complaint precipitated a coast-to-coast discussion of whether women who cover men's professional sports should continue to have equal access to the locker room. Frankly, the issue isn't difficult.

Professional football (and other men's pro sports) depends upon public support. So for self-interested reasons, if no other, it cannot shut its doors to the media. The media now include men and women (there are about 500 females in sports journalism), and there is no good reason why pro football (or any other professional sport, for that matter) should deny females the same access it gives males. Besides, they have a job to do. The question is, however, equal access . . . to what?

It is writ nowhere in holy stone that reporters must interview athletes only in their locker rooms. A little known but important fact is that while the National Football League requires equal access, it allows to each club to decide whether to open the locker rooms to reporters or provide separate interview areas. Only the Dallas Cowboys have elected the latter course, but it's the most sensible.

Of course, there are objections. Some owners who fritter away large sums on much smaller items don't want to spend the few bucks it would cost to construct an interview facility—an unenlightened position, to say no worse. And some professional sports reporters tend to regard their post-game presence in the locker room as something akin to a constitutional right. Astonishingly, there are some reporters (such as Christine Brennan of the *Washington Post*) who say they'd fight equally hard for men to be allowed in women's locker rooms. Is this what women—or men—really want?

A separate interview room is the way to go. It would protect the privacy of those players for whom it matters. And it would create a welcome degree of order for post-game interviews—precisely what a few players apparently need if they are not to commit some near felony. An orderly atmosphere would also promote more considered responses to postgame queries.

Incidentally, the people who run women's professional sports (golf and tennis) provide interview rooms. Here, the men could learn from the women. □

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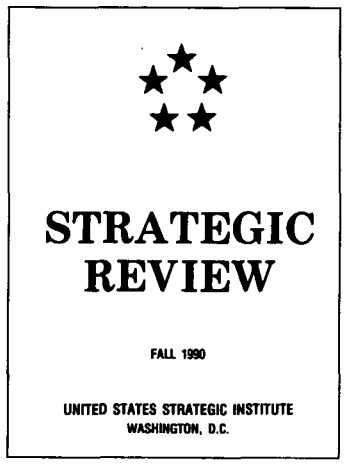

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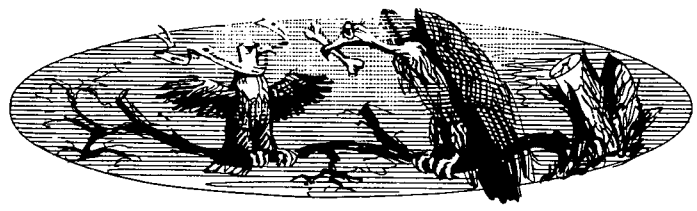

THE SAGA OF CRAZY EARL

by Victor Gold

Little Davey Duke, oh yeah. . . . You know that sapsucker went and bought hisself a new nose? Oh yeah . . . Flew all the way to California to pay one o' them plaster surgeons fifty thousand bucks just to pretty up his snoot. Ain't he the pretty one? Oh yeah . . . that "Pretty Boy" Duke got him a sweet li'l manicurist to shine up his pinkies, and a full-time barber does nothin' but spray his hair, and an Eye-talian shirtmaker who charges five hundred bucks just to pick up a needle, and a tailor from England to do his hand-stitched Klan robes that glow in the dark. . . . Oh yeah.

—Louisiana's Earl K. Long
on the subject of David Duke

Earl Long said nothing of the sort, of course, but only because he's been dead thirty years. He would have, though, if the Great Poll-taker in the Sky hadn't changed Earl's precinct in September 1960, roughly about the time David Duke was in high school, squeezing Aryan-pure blackheads and plowing through the English-translated Hitler jugend edition of *Mein Kampf*.

Oh yeah. Wouldn't it be a joy, though, to COME SEE AND HEAR GOVERNOR EARL LONG, in Ville Platte or Haynesville, lighting into the candy-ass Klansman from Metairie the way he lit into Harold McSween in his last campaign, the summer of 1960? McSween, according to Long, was nothing but "a full-fledged faker and anointed jackass . . . a hothouse plant born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and you couldn't pry it out with a crowbar . . . a yellow-bellied sapsucker, a spoiled brat . . . that little hypocrite." *Whewwww* . . . and all Harold McSween did wrong was get hisself elected to Congress in Earl's home district!

The old man was always like that, even when he was young. My first recollection of Earl K. Long as a campaigner was during the wild-hair Louisiana governor's race of 1939-40, when he accused his opponent Sam Jones of smelling sweet. "He's a High-Hat Sam," charged Earl, "the high society kid, the high-kickin', high-and-mighty snide Sam, the guy that pumps perfume under his arms." If Jones ever became governor, Earl warned his fellow rustics, he'd "tax everything you got—your bedsprings, your bed bugs, your jackasses and your nanny goats."

I was an impressionable eleven at the time, a pre-pubescent populist who thought Earl Long was the best show around; which, as historian T. Harry Williams pointed out, was part of the Long family's appeal to Louisianians. Graft, chicanery, and political lies we expected from our public servants; with the Longs, at least, we got a floor show for our cover charge.

Twenty years later, when Earl's public vagaries and private demons brought him national publicity as another Southern governor who'd rounded the bend, I was among the few prescient political observers who predicted they'd never be able to hold the man in a nuthouse, because he had the perfect defense: Earl didn't let me down. "If I'm crazy *now*," he told the press after he'd outfoxed the sapsuckers who wanted him committed, "I've *always* been crazy."

Oh yeah. Crazy and smart, like his older brother Huey. Earl would say *smarter*. Huey, after all, got hisself assassinated at age forty-two.

He is remembered by students of picaresque Southern politics as *The Earl of Louisiana*, the title of A. J. Liebling's rollicking book that covered Long's last days on the sapsucker circuit. More recently Paul Newman, striving to impersonate the inimitable, played him in the movie *Blaze*, based on Bourbon Street stripper Blaze Starr's book about her bizarre affair with Crazy Earl. And now, for those few demagogue buffs in every community who thrive on politics as the art of the improbable, a pair of Louisiana historians, Michael L. Kurtz and Morgan D. Peoples, have collaborated on a definitive biography of the man, *Earl K. Long: The Saga of Uncle Earl and Louisiana Politics*.[1]

The sobriquet "Uncle Earl," as Liebling readers should recall, came to Long not so much because of his habit of handing out peppermint sticks to kids as his eccentric avuncular ties to Huey's son, Russell. That Huey and Earl had had their differences was a well-known fact of Louisiana political life; to the extent that when Earl ran for governor in 1948, he needed Russell at his side to reassure Longites that the feuding brothers had patched up their differences before Huey died. After election, Earl named Russell his executive secretary, then later that year repaid the political debt in full by backing his nephew in the race to fill the unexpired term of U.S. Senator John Overton. The race was close. With 90 percent of the votes in, Russell's opponent held what Professors Kurtz and Peoples describe as "a seemingly insurmountable 3,000-vote lead."

Badly depressed [write Kurtz and Peoples], Russell told his uncle that he was ready to concede defeat, but an irate Earl shouted, "Stop crying, you weak-kneed son of a bitch. I told you we were holding up some of the returns from the boys in the country. We'll make up them 3,000 votes."

Oh yeah, and did they ever. Russell won by 10,000, with some outlying precincts in St. Bernard and Plaquemines parishes giving him a nine-to-one pad against his opponent, Robert Kennon, who objected—the story isn't included in the Kurtz-Peoples book, but I remember it well—that in one precinct, where he received only fifty votes, he had *over seventy-five personal friends*; to which a sympathetic Uncle Earl replied, with existential realism, "Well, that's politics for you—one day you got friends, the next day you don't."

What interested Paul Newman in playing Earl Long, explained the actor, was that the man was an *authentic*. For all his low crimes and misdemeanors, Crazy Earl was a flesh-and-blood politician working from internal signals, however vertiginous, rather than from the strategies and tactics furnished by professional plasticizers. The opinions he vented on the stump were his own, not those of a task force producing "position papers." The zingers he used to warm up his crowds were inspired, not the kind of Gridiron

[1]Louisiana State University Press, 312 pp., $24.95.

Victor Gold is The American Spectator*'s national correspondent.*

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Club one-liners turned out by a Hollywood jokesmith. Going up against "Chep" Morrison, a new-breed urban politician, in one of his last campaigns, Earl said of his opponent, "He wears $400 suits. Put one of them $400 suits on Uncle Earl, it'd look like socks on a rooster."

The same could have been said if anyone had tried to fit Earl Long with a team of campaign consultants, professional speechwriters, and public opinion analysts. He was, as he often boasted, one of "the last of the red-hot poppas," an authentic whose raw candor would be a refreshing bracer in this Supermedia era of endemic euphemism and image-conscious modulation; not to forget the self-righteous goo-gooism inflicted on the body politic by such guardians of campaign morality as the League of Women Voters and Common Cause. Earl in a campaign debate? Try to envision it, not on the stump in the Louisiana boondocks, but on the tube. From Kurtz-Peoples' *Earl K. Long*, page 58:

> The Longs introduced a unique Louisiana political phenomenon. Opposing candidates frequently spoke at joint stump meetings, giving the voters the opportunity to contrast the men. Naturally, those joint appearances often degenerated into name-calling contests, and, at times, candidates lost their tempers. Always hotheaded, Earl succumbed to his temper and sometimes tried to assault his opponents. At one such meeting in Dry Prong, Julius [Long, another brother] opened with a series of vicious personal attacks on John Fournet. When Fournet's turn came, he retaliated with insinuations about the circumstances of Julius's and Earl's birth. After listening to the harangues for several minutes, Earl, unable to tolerate the insults any longer, charged toward the platform, shouting, "I'll clean your plow!" A group of farmers managed to restrain him from doing bodily harm to Fournet. Years later, Fournet recalled the incident and remarked that "the son of a bitch would have killed me."

Dan Rather, if you think tangling with George Bush was tough . . .

Liebling subtitled his book, "The Liberal Long," an understandable misnomer given the author's cramped ideological perspective. What else could a New York writer make of a Southern politician who stood up to the racists of his state in the segregationist fifties? But though a racial moderate and soak-the-rich populist, Earl was hardly a "liberal"; at least, not by the elite standards of any Manhattan assemblage of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s friends. Like his brother Huey, he was *sui generis*, an anti-establishment redneck Danton who, as Kurtz and Peoples put it, "refused to allow social convention or personal inhibition to keep him from doing whatever he wanted." From *Earl K. Long*, page 265:

> Earl and a Roman Catholic priest were having a friendly, casual conversation in his office. Suddenly, a lobbyist walked in and dropped a wad of cash on Earl's desk. "Don't worry about a thing," Earl told the man. "I'll take care of you." A few minutes later, a lobbyist from the other side walked in and left an even bigger wad of cash on his desk. Earl said "Don't worry about a thing, I'll take care of you." After the man left, Earl turned to the startled cleric and bellowed, "Who the hell do those bastards think they are, trying to bribe the Governor of Louisiana? I'm not going to do a thing for either one of these sons of bitches!"

There is a sniff of apocrypha in that one—Earl did not go unscathed through three decades of grand jury hearings because he left witnesses, especially *clerical* witnesses—but the fact that Louisianians believe the story tells us something about the man's management style. Earl was nothing if not a hands-on CEO, as when he personally engineered his release from the state hospital in Mandeville, after his wife Blanche put him there to await transfer to a mental institution. From *Earl K. Long*, pages 221-22:

> Distrusting his regular attorney, Theo Cangelosi, Earl called a close friend, Joe Arthur Sims, a lawyer from Hammond, and told him to come to Mandeville right away. Several hours later, Sims appeared in Long's room and discovered him stark naked, yelling, "JOE SIMS, WHERE THE HELL YOU BEEN?" Earl instructed Sims to file a suit of legal separation against Blanche, thus nullifying her legal authority as a spouse to have him recommitted. Then Earl told Sims to file a formal petition for a habeas corpus petition [and] to convene a meeting of the state Hospital Board, which had formal political jurisdiction over the Mandeville institution.

Follow closely now, law-lovers: After giving Sims his orders, Long began calling in chits from friends on the hospital board. In no time, (1) the board convened and fired its director, replacing him with one of Earl's close friends; (2) the new director then asked the board to fire the superintendent at the hospital where Earl was being held, replacing him with another close friend; (3) the new hospital superintendent then issued a statement certifying Earl as "completely rational" and discharging him from the hospital. Oh yeah. With a lawyer that crazy, Richard Nixon could have served out his full term and retired to San Clemente with a Nobel Peace Prize.

The Kurtz-Peoples biography, part of a Southern history series published by LSU Press, is not without flaw. Students of Dixie demagoguery are on notice that while the authors are in earnest, Joe Liebling was also *sui generis* which is to say that while Kurtz and Peoples have done their research, the artistry that brought Long to life in *The Earl of Louisiana* isn't easily replicated. There are times, too, when even the professors' research falters—as when they rely on off-the-wall FBI reports that variously charge that Earl Long was "extremely and rabidly anti-Semitic," as well as on the take from Mafia bosses Carlos Marcello and, as the authors have it, "Phil Kaistel" (the man's name was *Kastel*).

Well now. Maybe I'm as impressionable today as I was at age eleven, but if Earl Long was indeed being paid off by the Mafia, it strikes me that three decades of prosecutors and grand juries blew their assignments. Or could it be that they too were on the Mafia pad? And if Uncle Earl was indeed anti-Semitic, then God help the Jews, because even their best political friends are their enemies.

But why quibble over a few items, however questionable, in an otherwise sterling contribution to Southern political literature? Brother Huey has his full shelf in the library, including novels and documentaries. Now Earl, in addition to Liebling's *tour de farce* and a Paul Newman comedy, at least has a biography to call his own.

Not that Kurtz and Peoples, for all their research, get the full story. "Don't write anything you can phone," was Crazy Earl's way of never letting his left hand know what his right was taking. "Don't phone anything you can talk face to face. Don't talk anything you can smile. Don't smile anything you can wink. Don't wink anything you can nod."

And if, despite all, his political enemies should close in on what files he had? No problem, as Crazy Earl once told a reporter: "I've seen to it that all records and books they could harass me with have been destroyed."

Oh yeah, Dickie Nixon, oh yeah. □

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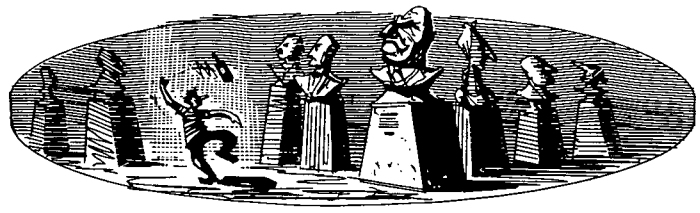

SURRENDER THE PINK

by Cathy Young

It is one thing to watch the Soviet press from a comfortable American distance, and quite another to be on the spot. When you turn on the television in Moscow and a man sporting the red badge of a People's Deputy says, "The press, owned by the [Communist] Party, was helping this partocracy kill the human soul [with] all this Bolshevik ideology and incitement of class hatred . . . we must free the people of Russia from the stupefying poison of Bolshevism"—it gives you something of a shock, no matter how theoretically prepared you might be for glasnost. In some ways, Soviet television can now be said to be "freer" than ours. After eleven, one can see shots of a nude man and woman frolicking on a beach on non-cable TV. On the local nightly news shows on the Moscow and Leningrad channels ("Moscow Teletype" and "600 Seconds"), crime reports feature prolonged, nauseatingly graphic shots of murder or accident victims, such as the naked body of a man found hacked to death in a park.

Cathy Young is the author of Growing Up in Moscow *(Ticknor & Fields).*

The main news program, "Vremya," remains rather staid, but now it has a competitor in the more lively and irreverent TSN, or "Television Service of News" with snappy Western-style graphics. In contrast to its older and duller sibling, the after-midnight TSN actually opens its broadcasts with the day's biggest event, not the one involving the Soviet Union's highest-ranking officials. The anchors and reporters editorialize with a flagrant sarcasm that exceeds the worst of American liberal media negativism. (Even on a "Vremya" program, the anchorwoman introduced a segment about some new charitable undertaking with a comment about "our heartless, indifferent society.") A not atypical TSN report (September 22) showed nine- and ten-year-old schoolchildren in the Northern province of Komi forced to work in the fields, pulling up beets and scraping them clean with large knives. A teacher supervising their labor explained that children were so employed every year, with weeks of schooltime lost: "This year, the harvest is bad so we hope that they won't have to work so much and will soon go back to their classes." Concluded the TSN reporter: "Let us finish this sad story on a happy note. Congratulations on a bad harvest, kids!"

Ghosts in the Machine

Yet every once in a while, the lingering state party control over the media will rear its head. A particularly egregious example was the "Pozitsiya" [Position] program of September 15, examining the controversy over monuments to Vladimir I. Lenin (him again), which are being taken down or vandalized in many parts of the USSR, to say nothing of Eastern Europe. All four panelists (who included veteran Soviet TV propag—er, journalist Genrikh Borovik and Minister of Culture Nikolai Gubenko) were adamantly opposed to the destruction of monuments to the *vozhd* (Russian for führer), though they did admit that these monuments were too numerous and that they had come to symbolize an oppressive regime. Virtually every single person interviewed, from academics to men and women in the streets, spoke against taking down the monuments, even though a *Moscow News* poll published in the October 7 issue showed that one-third of Soviet citizens have no problem with such landscape beautification. Most arguments were in a pragmatic rather than ideological vein—people should work and get the economy on its feet, not distract themselves by tilting at monuments—but the bias was blatant.

Even more heavy-handed was the editing to score emotional points: old footage of mourners trudging behind Lenin's coffin in the snow, juxtaposed with shots of wrecked monuments; a quick cut from a Bucharest crowd applauding as the city's huge statue of Lenin is being taken down, to Stalin clapping his hands on the Lenin mausoleum; and the unkindest cut of all, from an anti-Lenin rally to a deranged Moscow neo-Nazi leader ranting about "Zionists."

The panelists stressed that, however good or bad Lenin was, smashing or defacing statues and busts was an expression of "blood-lust" and "mob mentality." Still, the program plainly suggested that Lenin was more good than bad, and one of the panelists even said that "as long as there are rich and poor in this world, as long as there are people who are oppressed, Lenin will be perceived as the leader of the working class."

Just how far the Soviet Union has come can be gauged by the fact that a program like this sticks out like a sore thumb. Only a few days later, a documentary on the textile-producing town of Pavlov-Posad juxtaposed clips from an interview with a local Communist honcho who praises the working and fighting spirit of Soviet youth, and in-

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terviews with local boys and girls who speak of the squalor and hopelessness of their lives and sneer at Communist youth organizations. Asked about political pluralism, the party veteran snaps, "Frankly, I don't think a multiparty system will do anything for our country."

Correspondent: "And what has the one-party system done for us?"

Honcho: "It has turned a backward agricultural country into a great industrial power."

Cut to dismal shacks and antiquated, run-down textile factories.

Howdy, Pozner

September 21 saw the premiere of a new evening news program on Soviet national TV, "Telescope." A variety show with everything from political and cultural commentary to friendly spoofs of popular TV programs and polls gauging the popularity of various TV personalities, it ended up with a segment called "Repentance." This glasnost-age version of "True Confessions" is to be a regular feature of the program: a well-known person apologizes for his sins of collaboration with the *ancien regime*. And the first penitent was—none other than our old friend Vladimir Pozner. Staring manfully into the camera, he held forth roughly thus:

"Everyone has his sins, and it is good to confess them once in a while. . . . There were times when it was the duty of every decent man at the very least to keep silent, and probably to speak out. . . . There were two occasions that still cause me to feel disgust for myself. The first was the campaign against Sakharov, to which I joined my voice, though not as loudly as many others. [Here, he explained that his voice was intended more for the West, via Radio Moscow, than for home consumption.] The second was the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Both times I found excellent arguments to defend these actions, above all to myself. . . . Every time I think of that, I get a feeling of revulsion. There is nothing worse than fear—fear for one's own hide. My one hope is that others may learn a lesson from my example."

Especially a lesson in PR. The genius of this is that very few people in the Soviet Union know about Pozner's past. To them, he is Mr. Progressive TV, and his confession may seem a bold act of conscience with no ulterior motives: after all, he might have easily kept his mouth shut. Except that, of course, too many people in the West *do* know his record, and with today's easy communications, exposure would have been only a matter of time. What better, then, than a pre-emptive strike—at the bargain price of confessing to about one percent of his sins?

Red Goes Pink

Conservatives were always knocking the Soviets' Evil Empire with no proper appreciation of the fact that it was one of the world's remaining bastions of unapologetic heterosexism. Now that we've beaten Communism, gay liberation is coming to Mother Russia. Several articles championing that cause have appeared in the daily *Moskovsky Komsomolets* [The Moscow Young Communist]. A September 22 piece entitled "Gays, Children of the Earth" made the fanciful claim that the word "gay" comes from the name of Gaia, the ancient Greek goddess of the Earth, as well as the less original but probably just as preposterous claim that "the children of the earth" represent 10 percent of the population. The July 9 issue of the Russian-language Latvian weekly *Baltic Times* features a back-page interview with Roman Kalinin, head of something called the Association of Sexual Minorities. Asked about the association's membership, he says that "just as Israel considers all Jews to be its citizens, we regard all Soviet homosexuals as our members"—which he estimates, more modestly, at five percent of the population. However, Mr. Kalinin goes on to point out that heterosexuals are just as small a minority, whereas most people are bisexual: "A very big problem of our society is that a person cannot explore his possibilities. He may lead an exclusively heterosexual life without even suspecting that there is something else in his subconscious, his psyche. This adversely affects a person's psychology, his work, and ultimately the life of society as a whole." Now we know why all those Soviets in the street look so glum and tense. And what does Mr. Kalinin think of Gorbachev? "I suppose it's the best of the currently possible options. . . . However, I wouldn't want to sleep with him." Raisa, you can rest easy.

Alexander Cockburn's Ragtime Band

Meanwhile, unreconstructed stalwarts of the Evil Empire got to say their piece at the recent founding congress of the Communist party of Russia, which received rough treatment at the hands of the Soviet press, such as the *Izvestia* of September 14. Amidst the delegates' loud complaints about the "propaganda of the bourgeois way of life" and "attacks on that which is most dear to Soviet man" (i.e., Communist ideology), *Izvestia* quotes one true gem: "We know that already, some private businesses are engaging in exploitation. Can the local party organization do anything about these businesses? Comrades, we know we can't, because the exploited workers, receiving much higher pay for the same or even for less work than they would at a state enterprise, are not likely to come to us for help."

With such remarkable intellectual power to discern and analyze exploitation, the embattled party hacks needn't lose any sleep over their future. If they lose their *nomenklatura* jobs, they can always get a teaching job on a U.S. campus.

And Finally . . .

A note of warning: Unless the Soviet economy shapes up, Soviet Presswatch may soon die of natural causes. On September 20, an official announced on the "Vremya" broadcast that in a matter of weeks, the Soviet press may have to shut down for technical reasons. Not only is there a paper shortage, but they're running out of newsprint as well. Is it mere coincidence that this happens right after the USSR finally gets a law abolishing state censorship? □

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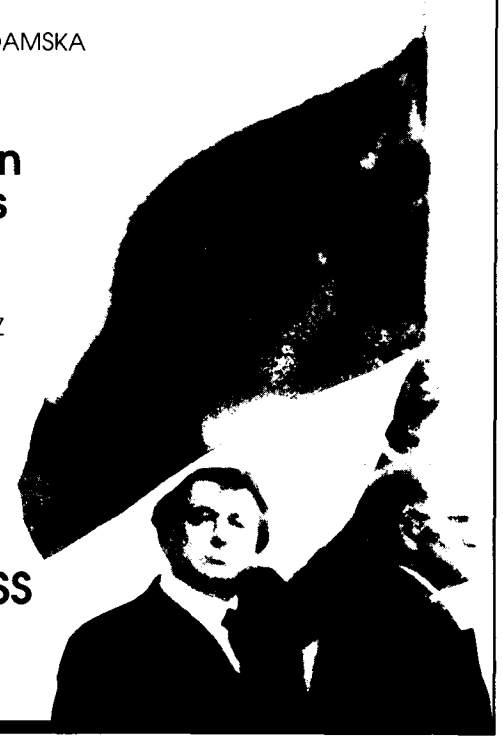

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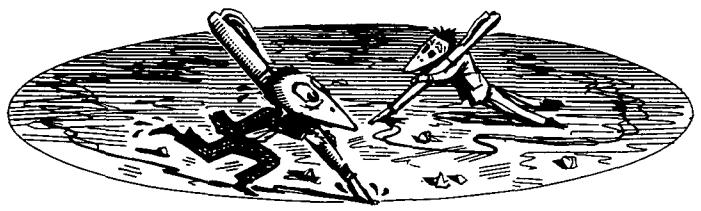

BAD TIME FOR GONZO

by Rick Marin

Washington, D.C.

When it's announced that there'll be a "slight delay" in Dr. Hunter S. Thompson's arrival time, the packed George Washington University auditorium bursts into applause and laughter. They want the god of Gonzo journalism to be late, to abuse their time and patience. They *expect* it.

Deafening cries of "Aw*riiight!* . . . Duke! . . . "Doctorrr!" A rube sitting next to me leans over and confides, "He's always late," shaking his head appreciatively. "We oughtta be down the street in a bar talkin' to him." My new friend lets out a dim chuckle and I realize this is no ordinary mob of half-wit undergraduates shirking their anthropology homework. This is a massive *fan event*, a cross between a *Star Trek* convention and a Grateful Dead concert. Tie-dyed 1960s throwbacks, poli-sci nerds, crazed conspiracy theorists—this frenzied rally is irrefutable evidence of an alarming new subculture: Gonzo Geeks. I never want to be in a room with them again. Not without more fire exits.

As it gets closer to nine—Thompson was due at eight—the mood begins to turn ugly, the hostility directed not at "the Doctor" but at the authorities failing to deliver him. Then a buzz starts. *He's here!* An outsized event organizer mounts the stage to deliver an introduction. He is booed away from the lectern. Hunter S. Thompson emerges into the light and a standing ovation. He walks like a puppet, a crippled jock in a white polo shirt, chinos, and white basketball shoes. A crimson St. Andrews golf course hat hides his hairless pate. Stereo cables are hanging around his neck. He's carrying a bullhorn.

He has Pat Caddell in tow.

"I don't make speeches," Thompson barks, sitting at a small table with Caddell, once the Democrats' backroom Wunderkind, now potbellied with a graying beard. The microphone doesn't work. Thompson uses the bullhorn. The mike is quickly revived but his mumbled staccato renders half of what he says unintelligible. The floor is opened to questions. Caddell, sporting a black T-shirt emblazoned with a "Gonzo" dagger logo, announces his role as "master of ceremonies."

First, the Persian Gulf: Thompson suggests beheading the "degenerate" Kuwaiti Emir as a solution acceptable to all parties. Wild applause. Then the nut questions start.

A tie-dyed youth whose valley-guy vowels sound exactly like Sean Penn in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* alludes to the wide availability of crack in the District of Columbia and wants to know if it would be "morally plausible" to behead William Bennett. Thompson mutters impatiently. He doesn't want to talk about the Persian Gulf or the War on Drugs. He wants to talk about the Fourth Amendment, "the right of the people . . . against unreasonable searches and seizures." He is, in fact, *obsessed* with the Fourth Amendment, specifically its relation to the events of November 26, 1989, when his cabin in Woody Creek, Colorado, was searched for eleven hours by sheriff's deputies on the basis of a complaint by a woman acquainted with the X-rated film industry who said Thompson had, among other things, twisted her left breast after she refused to join him in his hot tub. On a warrant from the D.A.'s office the deputies seized about a line's worth of cocaine (.09 gram), thirty-nine hits of LSD, some drug paraphernalia, an antique gun, and four sticks of dynamite. Thompson was charged with five felonies and three misdemeanors—up to fifty years in prison if convicted. The charges were dismissed.

Caddell reads a passage from Thompson's recently published *Songs of the Doomed*[1] that calls for vengeance against the "thugs, liars, crooks" and "lazy human scum" who brought the charges against him: "Not now. . . . Not today but *soon! Yes!* We will PUNISH them! We will chop off their fingers and gnaw on their skulls and feed their flesh to our animals!"

This widely publicized brush with law enforcement has obviously energized Thompson, recharged the adrenal paranoia that drove him during the Nixon years and ran dry under Reagan. He's suing the Aspen D.A.'s office for $22 million. He gravely warns the audience that their Fourth Amendment rights will be similarly abused unless they *act now*. "Participatory democracy!" is what he wants, berating the assembled generation for "bitching and not doing anything about it." Someone yells out David Duke's name, trying to elicit abuse of the Louisiana "white trash" who gave the ex-Klansman their vote. But Thompson refuses to malign Duke or his following. "At least they voted," he concludes, praising Duke for being an astute politician.

The crowd doesn't know how to deal with this. Slurred cries of "Duke!" (the *Doonesbury* caricature of himself Thompson despises) and "What are you drinking?" flare up—desperate attempts to connect with the narcotic madman who inhabits the dog-eared copies of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* which many of these brain-dead acolytes are clutching like Bibles.

A disturbed conspiracy freak wants to know if Thompson has heard about the "King Alfred Plan," a "widely documented" plot devised in 1962 calling for all minorities in America to be rounded up so the U.S. government could "commit genocide on them."

He hasn't.

One of the poli-sci nerds jumps up. His question, the usual attack on Sen. Jesse Helms, takes the form of a speech that requires him to quote Benjamin Franklin. This is the only guy who at the end of the night goes up to shake Pat Caddell's hand.

Another speechified question comes from a cute feminist chick (*oops*) who complains, "I don't see how we can talk about participatory democracy when all the women in this room are too intimidated to ask a question." Thompson responds by inviting her on stage, seating her in his chair—"Watch your left breast!" a heckler cracks—and crouching nearby while she discusses "women's bodies," "people of color," and the Exxon Corporation. On her way offstage, he kisses her.

About midway through the two-hour performance, a member of the long-haired tie-dyed tribe shimmies down the edge of the stage curtain behind Thompson and hands him half a grapefruit, a votive offering inspired by the pages of *Fear and Loathing*. The awestruck fan is instantly hustled away by grim, uniformed campus security, who muscle him out the door like he'd just tried to shoot the President.

Thompson halts his paranoid ranting about the erosion of justice in America long enough to take a spontaneous drug poll. Caddell names a drug and the

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Rick Marin is the television critic of the Washington Times.

[1]Subtitled *More Notes From the Death of the American Dream: Gonzo Papers Volume III* (Summit Books, $21.95).

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crowd rates it on the applause meter. Marijuana: moderate clapping. LSD: louder clapping, cheers. Heroin: noise from one respondent who is either a junkie or a liar. The only drug to get no applause and catcalls: cocaine. An epitaph for the 1980s if ever there was one. Even Thompson, the patron saint of substance abuse, calls crack "evil."

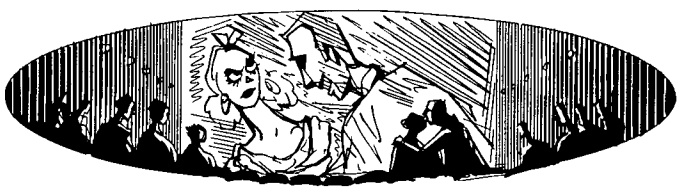
"*P. J. O'Rourke!*" an ear-splitting fraternity-dude voice has been chanting all night, getting no comment on the Gonzo Republican who is to this generation of *Rolling Stone* readers what Thompson was to his. Caddell, hack Democrat to the end, refuses to recognize the guy: "Oh, please," he spits vindictively. Finally, Thompson intervenes. "I like P. J. . . . P. J.'s good. He's an old friend of mine." Caddell, silenced, moves on to the next question.

Thompson talks until eleven o'clock, when Caddell brusquely terminates the proceedings. The crowd has thinned, some having fled the endless invocations of the Fourth Amendment and the case of *Hunter S. Thompson* v. *The Aspen D.A.* In a worst case scenario, he could turn into Lenny Bruce, who spent the last years of his life reading from court transcripts to bored audiences. Thompson's brain is febrile but not completely fried. "Our generation will not be remembered kindly in the history books," decrees the prophet of doom in a moment of lucidity. Mobbed for autographs afterwards, he dutifully signs books while the mob shouts more moronic, fist-in-the-air slogans of party-animal solidarity.

"See ya on the bus, Dr. Thompson!" a Gonzo Geek bellows.

Dr. Thompson does not look up. □

THE TALKIES



REELING IN THE YEARS

by James Bowman

Time was when we looked back with wistful nostalgia upon the world of our fathers and grandfathers. Now it is our own lives of only a few years ago that seem irradiated with the aura of collective memory. Recently the first Swatch watches, made between 1983 and 1985, fetched up to $20,000 at auction in Milan. Already they're collectors' items.

Part of the appeal of the movies, too, these days is that they serve as a sort of national family snapshot album. We love to be reminded of what a 1972 Plymouth Fury looked like when it was new—and that gasoline cost 29 cents a gallon not so very long ago. The original *Back to the Future* derived a lot of its appeal from its nostalgia trip back to the 1950s and all the Vietnam films are evocations of the sixties and seventies. Can the eighties be far behind? Nowadays it is quite common even for films with a more or less contemporary setting, like Martin Scorsese's *GoodFellas*, to take their characters ten or twenty years back in the past in order to give the property, costume, and make-up people a chance to show off their period re-creations. Scorsese's do a bang-up job.

When Peter Bogdanovich made *The Last Picture Show* in 1971, he was looking back at rural Texas in the fifties, which was itself looking back upon the romantic (and cinematic) vision of the Old West with increasing anxiety for the gap between myth and reality. The sequel, *Texasville*, looks back only to 1984, and its characters, now supposedly thirty (really twenty) years older, are celebrating their town's centennial. They seem to have as little understanding of their earlier selves as they do of nineteenth-century Texas.

Both movies, that is, are used only as backdrops to what seem like quite pointless battles. The scale model of old Texasville is attacked for celebrating fornication and liquor, still the town's principal pastimes, and the behavior of the characters in high school is a reproach to them in the present—either because of what they have done or because of what they have not. Marriages and friendships are poisoned by the past, but it seems to have little other function in this film. The result is an aimless picture about aimless people which seems to have little more to say to us than that we ought to hug more.

Part of the contrast between past and present is captured in the difference between black-and-white and color. Paradoxically, the Technicolor *Texasville* seems more drab than the monochrome *Last Picture Show*, and so it is in Maurizio Nichetti's *Icicle Thief*, which puts together a pastiche of Vittorio De Sica's black and white classic, *The Bicycle Thief*, and the high-color images of television commercials. The comedy of having an interchange of characters between the two wears a little thin but it makes a serious point about how postwar neo-realism is as much a part of the past as Realism itself—because the social conditions which gave rise to both are gone. Instead we have the triviality of consumerism.

Part of the comedy of *The Icicle Thief* lies in the frantic attempts of its characters to establish some *modus vivendi* between the two worlds, by, for example, bringing shopping carts full of groceries from the unreal, consumerist nineties back into the impoverished but warm-and-fuzzy universe of the Realist cinema. In much the same way, a lot of people living in the time capsule of Eastern Europe these days must wish that they could enjoy the benefits of a Western economy while preserving the more comfortable features of a world which has so largely been protected from progress. Meanwhile, the Neo-Realist director (played by Nichetti himself) keeps trying to force his characters back into the mold of pathos and despair which his art has fashioned for them—and they keep ignoring him.

Maybe this is the dark secret of all Realism, neo- or otherwise: *real* real people, in their headlong rush to material prosperity, have no use for such art and refuse to be patronized by it. But,

when they arrive at their heart's desire, they find that they have created a society—like our own—more or less inhospitable to any art that doesn't need insurance. Perhaps it is the price we pay for our material happiness. De Sica's cinema is as appalling as the poverty and unemployment which gave rise to it and which we are otherwise so happy to see the back of. In a world of prosperity the worst thing we have to worry about is low self-esteem. What would the great Realists—and Neo-Realists—have thought of us?

These have been some of my thoughts, too, as I have turned over in my mind why it is impossible to imagine Joel and Ethan Coen's magnificent film, *Miller's Crossing*, in a contemporary setting. Here the trappings of the 1920s look more like the generic reality of *Dick Tracy* than like the lovingly re-created 1950s and '60s of *GoodFellas*. Both pictures deal with organized crime but with directly opposite means and intentions: *GoodFellas* uses a new cinematic language in order to make a very old point about its characters; *Miller's Crossing* uses an older, traditional cinematic language to say something new about them. *GoodFellas* is a morality play, a remake of *Public Enemy* in a contemporary idiom; *Miller's Crossing* is an old-time gangster flick that rises to the level of world-drama; it is as universal as the Fall of Man.

My preference, you will see, is for the latter. Scorsese's is a good idea for a morality play and probably more effective than *Public Enemy* as a deglamorization of mob life. Instead of having

James Bowman is TAS*'s movie critic.*

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his hero come home to Mamma riddled with bullets, he has him reduced to the banality of anonymous suburban existence in the federal Witness Protection Program. But it is still a morality play. It invites the audience to feel superior and smug as it recognizes the mirage of power and prestige for which these uneducated characters ruin their lives and the lives of others. Robert De Niro, Ray Liotta, and Joe Pesci act the three principals brilliantly, but we never understand them from the inside; we never feel what is asserted by the hero but hardly demonstrated by the film, the attractiveness of the gangster's life. At its most seductive, it is no more than tawdry delusion.

Miller's Crossing, by contrast, deliberately cuts us off from contact with the texture of real life in the past. Its milieu is that of an almost-crude cinematic gangsterdom, an Elliot Ness Never-Never Land from which the good guys have unaccountably departed, rather than the 1920s as anyone might actually remember them. Its Dashiell Hammett characters are carefully transplanted into an unlocalized, unspecified world of their own from which there is no exit into any other kind of life. We are not allowed to moralize about the corruption or the violence because no alternative to them is dramatically present—or even imaginable, so effectively have the Coens (and our understanding of the gangster-movie idiom) done their work.

The film says to us: "Say that the world is like this, i.e., a Hobbesian state of nature in which might makes right and survival depends on choosing the winning side; what follows then?" What follows is that the rational man lives only for himself, pursues his own ends ruthlessly and trusts no one. And are we quite sure that the world isn't like this? The Coens' rendering of it is schematic but it resembles our world morally (as opposed to materially) enough to give us an uncomfortable sense of reality in spite of its generic setting.

The rational man in *Miller's Crossing* is Tom Reagan, played by Gabriel Byrne. He is constantly referred to by the other characters, in both a complimentary and a disparaging way, as a "smart guy"; he invokes "reason" in response to the more simple-minded creed of his gang boss, Leo (Albert Finney), who says that "you help your friends and you kick your enemies"—because sometimes your friends have to be sacrificed to your enemies in your own interests. His standard answer to every proposal put to him is: "I'll think about it." And think he does. The film is punctuated with his solitary moments of contemplation and smoking—which, whatever its deleterious effects upon the health, makes for beautifully atmospheric photography—in the half-light of his apartment.

In contrast there is the other mob boss, Johnny Caspar (Jon Polito), whose hitman's motto is: "Always put one in the brain." His term for anything less than complete submission to his own will is "the high hat," which is one of the many references to the film's laboriously established symbolism of hats, those outward and visible signs of more inward and theoretically useful headpieces. Both remind the audience of that which is supposed to distinguish humanity from the brute creation—so hilariously invoked by Johnny over the opening credits when he says that a world in which a fixed fight doesn't stay fixed is one on the verge of anarchy, "the law of the jungle."

This appeal to a distinctive human quality also comes at the picture's central moment when Tom, having urged that his ally and the brother of his mistress, the odious Bernie (John Turturro), be given up to execution in order to keep the peace with a powerful rival, is actually given the job of executing him himself. As Tom leads him to his death in a marvelously evocative woodland setting, Bernie appeals to the fact that "You can't change a guy's nature. We're not muscle," he says. "We're not like those animals, the hired killers," and he points out that he is being led out to die "like a dumb animal." Finally he begs: "I'm praying to you; look in your heart. Look in your heart."

And, wonderful to say, Tom does. For one thrilling moment in this unrelieved chronicle of cynical and violent self-advancement, someone acknowledges a humanity of the heart as well as of the head. Of course, if it got you anywhere, everyone would do it. Bernie takes this act of mercy towards himself as a sign of weakness and attempts to exploit it further to his own advantage. Tom himself is nearly killed at least twice as a result of it, and in the end he seems to repudiate it when Bernie, now transparently manipulative, asks him to "Look in your heart" for a second time. "What heart?" replies Tom. But we know what heart.

And he does, too. For once in his life he has sacrificed his own interest, even his own safety, in response to the sufferings of a fellow human being. That act is a testimony to the humanity that everything else in the film conspires to render inert, if not to degrade. Tom doesn't understand it himself, any more than he understands why he remains true to Leo even when he stands to gain nothing by it: "Do you always know why you do things?" he asks. It's a dangerous question for someone whose life may depend on his knowing why he does everything. But in its way and in the grim world of this picture, it is as much a hallmark of moral heroism as the act of the man who lays down his life for his friend.

I do really believe that this is one of the greatest films to come out of Hollywood in a generation. It is brilliantly written, beautifully photographed, and marvelously acted, and it makes everything else—especially movies which use similar techniques or have similar ambitions, such as *Dick Tracy* or *Wild at Heart*—look feeble by comparison. Above all, we should take heart from it that the contemporary cinema is capable of recognizing the real truth of the maxim that the past is never more present to us than when we see ourselves in it. □

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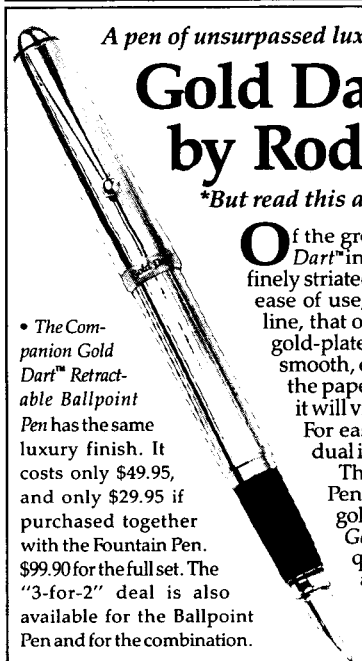

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE MOTHER TONGUE: ENGLISH & HOW IT GOT THAT WAY

Bill Bryson/William Morrow & Co./270 pp. $18.95

John Simon

There are various reasons for writing a book about a language. One may trace its history; codify its grammar; evolve new theories about it and, perhaps, relate it to other languages in new ways; collect essays on different aspects of it; write a usage handbook for its speakers and writers; gather curiosities and anecdotes about it, and play verbal games with it. Bill Bryson's *The Mother Tongue: English & How It Got That Way* has a little of each category about it, which need not be a bad thing.

Actually, it is not so much about English as it is about English and other languages and language in general, which is fine with me. And sometimes it is even about what it promises: about how English evolved. It is written by a journalist rather than a linguist, a lover rather than an expert, which may be all to the good. Bryson has acquired considerable linguistic erudition, embraced numerous books on his subject, and, like a true lover, revels in revelations about his beloved.

What is lacking, by and large, is a point of view. Now and then an opinion, an evaluation, does surface; but promptly we are back with facts and figures and stories and bits of history, and how many words for snow do the Eskimos have, and how do people in different languages curse—except in those in which, sad to say, there are no cursewords—and it's all fun and games again. The book is mostly descriptive and permissive, whereas I hold with the prescriptive and elitist. And something else: Did you notice that ampersand in the subtitle? I think ampersands in titles are cutesy and bad news.

The Mother Tongue grew out of variously placed journalistic pieces, their provenance ranging from the language quarterly *Verbatim* to the *TWA Ambassador* magazine. No harm in that, especially since the tone of the book remains consistent throughout. But there is no introduction explaining where the author "comes from," though we are told whence he comes: Des Moines, where he was born, and England, where he has been living for some years, plying his journalist's trade at such reputable publications as the London *Times* and the *Independent*. But why does an Iowan, with explicable wanderlust, head, less explicably, for England?

I do not own Bryson's first book, *A Dictionary of Troublesome Words*, but I do have his second one, *The Lost Continent*, which provides an answer, more or less. In it, Bryson, not quite so young any more, tells about how he fulfilled his desire "to go back to the magic places of [his] youth . . . and see if they were as good" as he remembered them; also to check up on how "small-town America" looks these days and how it is doing. The book is a carefree account of travels with a Chevy among reminiscences and discoveries, which he sums up near the end:

> I visited all but ten of the lower forty-eight states and drove 13,978 miles. I saw pretty much everything I wanted to see and a good deal that I didn't. I had much to be grateful for. I didn't get shot or mugged. The car didn't break down. I wasn't once approached by a Jehovah's Witness. I still had sixty-eight dollars and a clean pair of underpants. Trips don't come much better than that.

That is fetching, frolicsome writing, with a nice feeling for statistics and style, a good eye or nose for details ("a clean pair of underpants") and a sense of humor. But also with a bit of journalistic cuteness that dogs the book from its opening paragraph, which I reproduce in its entirety:

> I come from Des Moines. Somebody had to. When you come from Des Moines you either accept the fact without question and settle down with a local girl named Bobbi and get a job at the Firestone factory and live there forever and ever, or you spend your adolescence moaning at length what a dump it is and how you can't wait to get out, and then you settle down with a local girl named Bobbi and get a job at the Firestone factory and live there forever and ever.

This is patronizing and coy. If you have the kind of sophistication Bryson evidently has, patronization of Des Moines may be hard to resist; but, even then, coyness should be avoided. The book has a lot of it, as well as genuine nostalgia for America, so you must not assume it to be an exercise in condescension. Thus in the very last paragraph, as Bryson drives into Des Moines again in the afternoon sunshine, he loves it: "I could see why strangers came in off the interstate looking for hamburgers and gasoline and stayed forever." So we still haven't our answer to why Bryson had to escape all the way to England. He tells us that as a kid he watched a documentary on television about filmmaking in Europe and fell in love with it—Europe, not filmmaking. "As soon as I was old enough I left. I left Des Moines and Iowa and the United States and the war in Vietnam and Watergate, and settled across the world." Something is missing here.

We are not told either whether he studied linguistics at a university or whether it is just his avocation. It may even be that, since *The Mother Tongue* deals extensively (and necessarily) with differences and similarities between British and American English, language became for Bryson a way of reconciling his present with his past, of inhabiting at least verbally both his countries simultaneously by immersion in their diverse yet ultimately shared discourse.

The reason I am not content with merely discussing the book, but wish to explore Bryson's psyche as well, is that language has of late become more acutely than ever, but also more deviously, a battleground. As many have argued—and none more strikingly than Roger Scruton—the acrimony about language, about usage, about prescriptiveness versus descriptiveness, permissiveness versus standards (what some would call elitism), has a political basis. The pluralists and permissivists are generally to the left of center, from liberals to socialists; the prescriptivists are to the right, from conservatives to reactionaries. Language is simply a safer arena to contend in than politics, a less perilous frontier than the barricades. Bryson's book manages for the most part to enjoy language for its own sake, but a political bias does assert itself intermittently and sometimes contradictorily.

The chapter headings pretty much tell the story: The World's Language, The Dawn of Language, Global Language, The First Thousand Years, Where Words Come From, Pronunciation, Varieties of English, Spelling, Good English and Bad, Order Out of Chaos, Old World, New World, English as a World Language, Names, Swearing, Wordplay, The Future of English. On all of these subjects Bryson has

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John Simon, author of Paradigms Lost: Reflections on Literacy and Its Decline, *is the movie critic of* National Review *and the drama critic of* New York.

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some good things to say, whether he is sensibly rehearsing the basics, making generalizations worth considering, or adducing little known but piquant oddities. It is under that last rubric that I find him most valuable: good collector that he is, he has quite a collection to regale you with.

It hardly matters to me where Bryson got his information, as long as it is novel and instructive. So I find it fascinating to learn that "when a pause reaches four seconds, one or more of the conversationalists will invariably blurt something—a fatuous comment on the weather, a startled cry of 'Gosh, is that the time?'—rather than let the silence extend to a fifth second." It is good to be reminded that "even now most of us are not always sure whether we should say *dived* or *dove*, *sneaked* or *snuck*, *hove* or *heaved*, *wove* or *weaved*, *strived* or *strove*, *swelled* or *swollen*," even if Bryson does not see fit to quell our quandary. Or take this well-taken point: "A rich vocabulary carries with it the danger of verbosity, as evidenced by our peculiar [English] affection for redundant phrases, expressions that say something twice: *beck and call*, *law and order*, *assault and battery*, *null and void* . . . " etc., etc.

Similarly thought-provoking is that "although English is a Germanic tongue and the Germans clearly were one of the main founding groups of America, there is almost no language from which we have borrowed fewer words than German." But to make this more than a factoid, Bryson should offer an explanatory hypothesis. Is it that English is really made not in America but in England, whither Germans did not emigrate in large numbers in post-Norman times? Or did the Germans in America learn English quicker than others and jettison their words before American English might have adopted them? Or is German too close to English to hold out anything different enough to be worth stealing? Or did Germans stick together and not mingle much with other ethnic groups?

I am astounded to learn that "an analysis of speech at the Bell Telephone Laboratories . . . detected more than ninety separate sounds just for the letter *t*," and would like to learn how some of the other phonemes (or telephonemes) made out. It is no less titillating (I'll try to use that word more often in phone conversations: if the Bell people are still counting, we might hit a hundred) to read that "just in the six counties of northern England, an area about the size of Maine, there are seventeen separate pronunciations of the word *house*," which rightly leads Bryson to considerations climaxing in a quotation from Shaw: "It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman despise him." And it is no less stimulating to learn that "more than eighty spellings of Shakespeare's name have been found," and that Will kept changing the spelling himself, sometimes doing it "two ways on one document," and *never* spelling it "Shakespeare."

Again, I am delighted with Bryson's sampling of bad English from leading experts and dictionaries; but it is a mite disheartening that our critic can be sloppy in the process of criticizing others. Thus he quotes from Robert MacNeil and Co.'s *The Story of English* (the most dubious of his authorities): "When his fellowship expired he was offered a rectorship . . . on condition that he married the deceased rector's daughter." Rightly he observes that this should read "on condition that he marry." However, this is not, as he explains, a "misuse of the subjunctive"; rather, it is a failure to use it where needed.

Returning to Shakespeare, Bryson tells us that the poet "must have possessed thousands of words he never used "because he didn't like or require them," and cites among these "Bible, Trinity, Holy Ghost." That could constitute an interesting argument against scholars who would make Shakespeare out to be a devout Christian, but Bryson does not pursue the matter. True, it would be a digression, but in a book full of digressions, what's one excursus more or less?

It is also chastening to learn of the occasional eccentricities of the Oxford English Dictionary, e.g., "The OED . . . has always insisted on *-ize* spellings for words such as *characterize*, *itemize*, and the like [note the redundancy in "words such as . . . and the like"!], and yet almost nowhere in England, apart from the pages of the *Times* newspaper (and not always there) are they observed." I am glad to know that it was an American in England (like Bryson) who changed the absurd "gyrating circus" into the commonsensical "traffic circle." Also, I am a sucker for contradictions, so that nothing tickles me more than "that in Britain the Royal Mail delivers the post, while in America the Postal Service delivers the mail." Still, my joy is marred by that *while* for the correct *whereas*. Given the different hemispheres, the postman sleeps while the mailman works and vice versa.

How splendid of the French "to have had a law against the encroachment of foreign words since as early as 1911" and a more recent one (1975) "which introduced fines for using illegal *anglicismes*." Bryson cites amusing instances of how far the French will go to avoid English words, but fails to notice their inconsistency in insisting that *hamburger* be *steak haché*, wherein *steak* remains good and English. Further, if you find English place names funny, and their pronunciations frequently no less so, you will be charmed to learn that there is an Okeford Fitzpaine in Dorset "which many locals pronounce—for reasons no one can begin to guess at—'fippeny ockford.' "

Dyed-in-the-wool puritans might profit greatly from Bryson's discussion of how "the emotional charge attached to words can change dramatically over time." Until somewhere in the eighteenth century all our so-called four-letter words were standard usage, whereas "in nineteenth-century England *puppy* and *cad* were highly risqué." Similarly, "*blooming* and *blasted* . . . were . . . considered nearly as offensive as the more venerable expletives they were meant to replace." And back in 1649 a law was passed making "swearing at a parent . . . punishable by death." I doubt whether it was often enforced: it could easily have decimated the population.

Above all, do not think that we have come a long way since then: Hollywood was banning the word *dame* as late as 1949; when we eat chicken, we euphemize legs and breasts into drumsticks and white meat. No less food for thought is Bryson's conclusion, in response to the OED's ex-editor's fear that British and American English might become mutually incomprehensible within 200 years: "If we should be worrying about anything . . . it should be . . . that they will grow indistinguishable . . . a sad, sad loss." Bryson is always at his best when singing the praises of English, e.g., "It is a cherishable irony that a language that succeeded almost by stealth, treated for centuries as the inadequate tongue of peasants, should one day become the most successful language in the world."

Unfortunately for a book of this kind, Bryson commits profuse errors of sundry kinds. Some of them are sheer carelessness, e.g., "The Dutch Mons is the French Bergen," where *Mons*, of course, is French, and *Bergen* Dutch. Elsewhere he writes that, for *colonel*, we have illogically "settled on the French pronunciation and Italian spelling," neither of which is true. It may again be carelessness rather than ignorance that makes him say that "the only real difference" between Serbian and Croatian lies in the different alpha-

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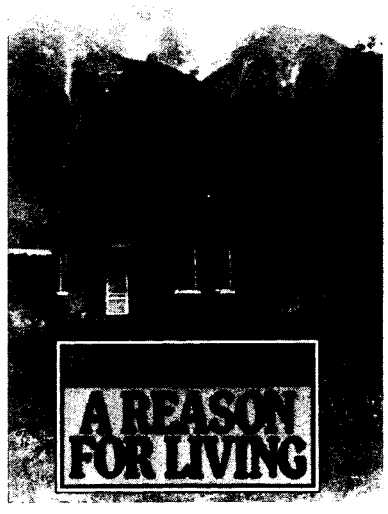

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bets they use; there are others, real enough for most of us. And it would be comforting to know that it is mere carelessness that makes him assert "*Queer* is still widely used in the South in the sense of strange or odd." It is so used south and north and east and west; the exception would be a stronghold of knee-jerk liberalism, where it might be queered by its slang sense of "homosexual."

Less easily defended as mere carelessness (if that, in fact, is a defense) is the assertion that the "er" sound, as in *herd*, "appears to be unique to English." Rather, it is remarkable that the synonymous English *murder*, German *Mörder*, and French *meurtre* should all contain just about the same "er" sound. And what are we to make of the claim that *rancher* was borrowed "from the Spanish *rancho*," when it was clearly borrowed from the Spanish *ranchero*? And Bryson is plain wrong to define *catachresis* as "drift of meaning," i.e., the way words change meanings over the centuries. Actually, as any dictionary would tell him, catachresis means either the improper use of a word or a far-fetched trope.

Equally worrisome, though not related to language, is Bryson's categorical statement that two of Shakespeare's plays, *Cardenio* and *Love's Labour's Won* "have been lost to us forever." Modern scholarship has established that a lost play, *Cardenno* or *Cardenna*, was enacted by Shakespeare's company, but that it was probably the work of Fletcher with the collaboration of Shakespeare, like *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. We'll probably never know for sure, though Bryson's "forever" may be a bit foolhardy. As for *Love's Labour's Won*, it may indeed be lost, but it is just as likely to be an earlier title of *All's Well That Ends Well*.

Again, Bryson declares that "mental fatigue . . . left us with two forms meaning the same thing," and cites a number of examples, e.g., *gather* and *forgather*, *fervid* and *perfervid*, *ravel* and *unravel*, *flammable* and *inflammable*. But these have less to do with fatigue (or inertia) of any kind than with plain ignorance. Thus *flammable* is a fairly recent coinage that seems to have arisen on the rear bumpers of gas trucks lest drivers in back of them, assuming *inflammable* to mean its opposite (*in* = *non*), be tempted to play bumper cars. Indeed, all the duplicates cited by Bryson are ignorant attempts to make a little-known word more accessible by a (redundant) prefix, e.g., *reiterate* for the synonymous *iterate*. A book has yet to be written showing that most changes in language have resulted from some form of ignorance; but since modern descriptive linguists need The People as their authority, they cannot afford to make them emerge as age-old ignoramuses.

But Bryson is not above even simpler abuses. Repeatedly he gives us the pleonastic "the reason is . . . because," the Gallicism *intriguing* for *fascinating*, the low-level Britishism "rather like *us* writing a history" (for *our*), *persnickety* for *pernickety*, and a dangler such as "But having said that, our native Anglo-Saxon root has given birth . . . " Or he'll list *dexterous* as a misspelling, whereas it is just an alternative for *dextrous*.

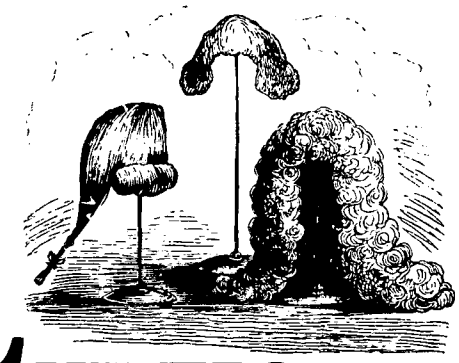
Consider also: "Equally, they want to watch TV," where *similarly* or *likewise* is called for; "it too never caught on" for "it never caught on either"; "Americans found it easier to change the spellings . . . rather than the pronunciations," where *rather* is clearly *de trop*; "most immediately" and "most complete," which are tautologies; "it is a wonder that anyone paid any attention. . . . Often they didn't"; "New York had more speakers of German than anywhere in the world . . . " But if Bryson's English can be shaky, his foreign languages often seem nonexistent. He asserts that in most European languages other than English one must say "It's *the* time to go to *the* bed," which simply isn't so—why, Slavic languages don't even have definite (or indefinite) articles. Or he will tell us that the peculiarities of Pennsylvania Dutch arise "from adapting English words to German syntax and idiom," and cites such mistaken examples as "What's the matter of him," where German would have *mit ihm* (with him), and "Come in and eat yourself," where German would say *essen Sie etwas*, or *was* (eat something).

Frequently, however, it is logic that proves too much for Bryson. Thus he is the master of the faulty analogy, as when he wonders whether the members of U.S. English, an organization opposing bilingualism in our schools, etc., "would be so enthusiastic about language regulations if they were transferred to Quebec and found their own language effectively outlawed?" But why would they be transferred? Neither were the various Hispanics who *elected* to come here. In giving examples of bad English from our leaders (e.g., Bush, Quayle), Bryson wonders whether it isn't a "trifle harsh to ask our youngsters to master their native language when we fail to demand the same of our national leaders." But our leaders, too, were youngsters once, and if good English had been taught them and demanded of them, it would have followed them to high places. Now that they're old dogs, there is no point in expecting them to learn new tricks.

It is clearly for lack of clear thinking that Bryson writes "relations between Romans and Celts had become so close as to be, in many respects, indistinguishable." Relations, the subject here, cannot become indistinguishable; Romans and Celts can, but they are not the subject of the sentence. And what about the "two ways of rendering speech into writing. One is with an alphabet, such as we have, or a pictographic-ideographic system, such as the Chinese use"? Clarity here demands parallel construction: "One is with . . . the other is with . . . " Otherwise the reader thinks that the American and Chinese ways are both subdivisions of "One," and "Two" is yet to come. And a couple of paragraphs further on, after evoking the complicatedness of Chinese, Bryson declares, "However, Chinese writing possesses one great advantage over other languages: It can be read everywhere." Surely, he doesn't mean everywhere in the world, but everywhere in China, because, regardless of differences in dialect, all Chinese write in the same way. That, however, is true of almost any language; so, then, where is this great advantage over Polish or Portuguese or the rest?

Bryson, moreover, has problems with style; he is apt to be cutesy, archaic, *recherché*, stilted. So we get a "dialect that many of them ill spoke anyway," "which way they are still spelled in England," "in matters linguistic," and more. This fits in with a lack of fine discrimination, as in "we can choose between, say, *earthly* and *terrestrial*, *motherly* and *maternal*, *timely* and *temporal*." True, *earthly* and *terrestrial* are more or less identical (though no one would speak of a "terrestrial paradise"), but even weak stylists distinguish between *motherly*, as in "a motherly woman," and *maternal*, as in "maternal grandfather." And almost anyone can tell the difference between *timely* and *temporal*: Would one speak of "a timely residence on earth" or "the temporal arrival of the U.S. Cavalry"?

As I suggested earlier, politics must



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be factored in here. It is a populist who writes that change in usage, grammar, meaning is "a natural process," to interfere with which "is arguably both arrogant and futile," since it will prevail "no matter how many authorities hurl themselves in the path of change." But in the very next paragraph Bryson makes "a case for resisting change." He appeals to clarity and quotes John Ciardi to the effect that "resistance may in the end prove futile, but at least it tests the changes and makes them prove their worth." This, in essence, is a restatement of Dr. Johnson's famous "it remains that we retard what we cannot repel, that we palliate what we cannot cure."

Would not both these statements, and Ciardi's in particular, suggest that if the opposition were strong enough, certain changes would not take place? But what kind of intellectual rigor can we expect from a Bryson who moons over the superiority of Hawaiian creole to English because the former can say "I bin go store go buy shirt" for a wish that was realized, and "I bin go store for buy shirt" for one that remained unrealized; whereas English has only the ambiguous "I went to the store to buy a shirt." Bryson has evidently never heard the locutions "I went to the store and bought a shirt" and "I went to the store and tried to buy a shirt." Hence the conclusion, shared by many, if not most, linguists that "creoles are not in any way inferior." But where, I ask, is creole literature? Well, to listen to Bryson, "Gullah is as capable of poetry and beauty as any other language." Fine, you sentimental egalitarian, show me some!

Somehow it all boils down to common sense. For example, Bryson scoffs at those who, like *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*, reject the absolute use of *hopefully* in a sentence such as "Hopefully the sun will come out soon" as "a misplaced modal auxiliary" and require the "clumsily passive and periphrastic . . . 'It is to be hoped that the sun will come out soon.' " And he notes that no objection is raised to other words used in "the same unattached way—*admittedly, mercifully, happily, curiously*, and so on."

To this, a couple of objections impose themselves. First, *hopefully* is not comparable to *admittedly* and *happily*. The latter mean "admitted by" and "happily for" all of us; they do not contain a *-fully* that presupposes an agent full of the quality in question: hope, mercy, etc. Thus *curiously* does not predicate anyone filled with curiosity; *admittedly* does not predicate an agent full of admissions. Second, there is no need except in the most formal context for "it is to be hoped"; "I hope," "one hopes," or "let's hope" will do nicely.

What I am saying is that Bill Bryson is all too often rash, careless, illogical, uninformed. These undesirable attributes show up throughout his writings. Near the start of *The Lost Continent* we read: "I couldn't help but agree with her"—said by a lot of people but still a tautology: a conflation of "I couldn't help agreeing" and "I could not but agree." In Bryson's article "Confessions of a Book Tour Addict" (*Washington Post*, September 23, 1990), I read: "Almost all publishers provide their authors with a cohort in each city who whisks you with admirable efficiency from one interview to the next." That sentence displays an unadmirable anacoluthon as the object switches from *authors* to *you*; furthermore, *cohorts* means either one of the ten divisions of a Roman legion or a band united in some struggle. In the November 25, 1965, *Times Literary Supplement*, there is an apt reference to "the new American vulgarism of 'cohort' meaning 'partner.' "

Summing up *The Mother Tongue*, I would say that, personally, I would not want Mr. Bryson as my guide through the intricacies of the English language, but that his book is often diverting and informative about this and that. For instance, it is very good on technical terms such as polysemy, orthoepy, aphesis, hyperlect, onomastics, metaphasis, amphibology, hemiteleia, and holorime. That last one is a French technical term for something I have long known without being able to name it. (It is not to be found even in J. A. Cuddon's excellent *Dictionary of Literary Terms*.)

It is "a two-line poem in which each line is pronounced the same but uses different words." A French example of this form where "sense often takes a backseat to euphony" is, as quoted by Bryson, "*Par le bois du Djinn, ou* [sic, for *où*] *s'entasse de l'éffroi* [sic, for *effroi*],/ *Parle! Bois du gin, ou cent tasses de lait froid*!" We are also offered an English holorime by the British humorist Miles Kington, entitled "A Lowlands Holiday Ends in Enjoyable Inactivity": "In Ayrshire hill areas, a cruise, eh, lass?/ Inertia, hilarious, accrues, hélas." But, *hélas*, Bryson neglects the most famous holorime, attributed to the great Alfred de Vigny:

Gall, amant de la reine, alla, tour magnanime,
Galamment de l'Arène à la Tour Magne à Nîmes.

And that's another occasion on which I wouldn't want Bryson as my guide: on a great-hearted walk from the Arena to the Magne Tower in Nîmes. He just isn't cosmopolitan enough. □

AGENTS OF INFLUENCE

Pat Choate/Alfred A. Knopf/295 pp. $22.95

David Brock

It is difficult to recall a recent book that has so shaken the Washington hive—former officials of the Reagan and Carter administrations, think-tankers right and left, the redoubtable pundits Michael Kinsley and Hobart Rowen—as has Pat Choate's *Agents of Influence*. When the Beltway wisemen decide to join forces in this way, it's a good idea to check your wallet, or, in this case, the offending book.

There are some glaring conceptual flaws in this work, but they can't account for such a hateful reception; Choate appears even to have lost his job at TRW, Inc., which does a lot of business with the Japanese, in the fracas. What irritates, I think, is that Choate has produced a rare Washington book, neither a dull political-science tome, nor a self-serving kiss-and-tell memoir, but one that yanks back the curtain and reveals something unlovely about how the place really works.

Choate names names and flogs sacred cows. At one point, describing his guerrilla tactics, the author bemoans the polite convention that "you cannot impugn the motive behind someone's argument, only the argument itself." Indeed, one-fifth of the book is comprised of elaborate appendixes listing former U.S. officials, their foreign clients, and their fees, including everyone from Democratic National Committee Chairman Ron Brown to George Bush's former chief of staff Daniel J. Murphy.

David Brock is a John M. Olin fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

Choate estimates that Japan spends more than any other country, $400 million a year, to employ an army of Washington lobbyists, lawyers, and publicists. They are tasked with hawking Japan's "propaganda"—for example, that the trade deficit is all America's fault, or that the culturally unique Japanese don't want foreign goods—to U.S. trade officials, Congress, and the media, with the intent of keeping U.S. markets wide open to Japanese exports and easing pressures on Japan to liberalize its economy.

Choate is particularly appalled by the revolving door: "Many now see public service as nothing more than a booster rocket on a one-way journey to wealth and power as a D.C. insider." These hangers-on, many of whom have no known talents other than a taste for three-course lunches, are not breaking any laws, but they are pushing the bounds of ethical propriety and trampling on the concept of civic virtue, Choate charges.

Take David Olive, a Foggy Bottom type who laid the groundwork in the recent U.S.-Japan high-tech trade talks. In the midst of the talks, Olive up and left State to work in the electronics firm Fujitsu's Washington office, taking with him knowledge of U.S. bottom-line negotiating positions, and confidential information on the U.S. semiconductor, telecommunications, and supercomputer industries.

Worst is that so much of this flackery and wheel-greasing is undercover. Choate notes that when Elliot Richardson appears on a talk show opposing limits on foreign investment, he's addressed as "Mr. Ambassador," rather than as general counsel for the Association for International Investment. Ex-trade official Harald Malmgren was quoted in the *Washington Post* as criticizing Zenith during its fight against Japan's television cartel, without a mention of his having raked in $300,000 from Japanese television manufacturers. "Independent" trade associations like the U.S.-Japan Trade Council are really "front groups for

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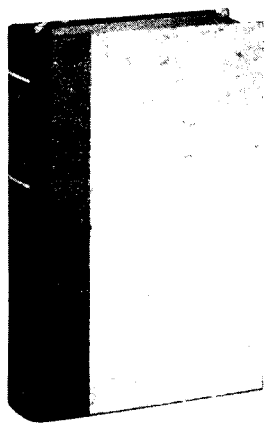

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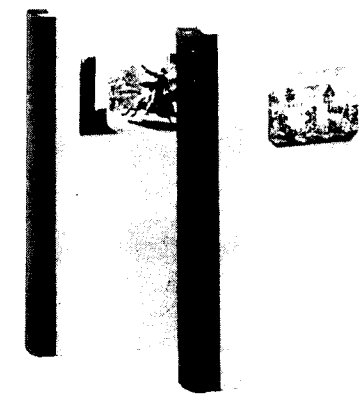

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Japanese companies." And too many D.C. Rolodex operators avoid registering with the Justice Department as foreign agents by masking their activities behind such appellations as "consultant" and "adviser."

The most scandalous revelations here, however, concern Japan's efforts to skew the information we use to analyze Japanese society, beginning with the apparently common dissemination of Japanese-funded teaching materials in U.S. elementary schools. One such workbook, Choate reports, dwells on "America's role in 'creating' war in the Pacific—U.S. actions that are said to have influenced Japan's decision to attack Pearl Harbor, and Japan's perspective on America's dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki." At the university level, according to Choate, 80 percent of research on Japan is funded by Japan, leading researchers to an odd focus on improving U.S.-Japan relations rather than on the intricacies of Japan's industrial policies or money-politics. Pity Japan: it pays through the nose to get the kind of sycophantic treatment from the American academy that the Soviets and the Sandinistas got for a song.

As a metaphor for the decadent swamp that is today's Washington, or as a general argument for full disclosure in public debate, *Agents of Influence* is good reading. Unfortunately, its breathless focus on Japan is meant to alarm us about an imaginary "Japanese threat" and discredit free-traders as useful idiots. Choate writes, "The real issue is whether or not the manipulation of America's political and economic system . . . has reached the point where it threatens our national sovereignty and our future." Perhaps this desperate bit of hyperbole means that managed-traders like Choate think they're losing the policy battle, though there is probably a large public appetite for such pap.

But we ought not abide Choate's nativist implication that Japanese money is somehow more tainted than, say, American money (recall the HUD and S&L influence-peddling). What is more, Choate's overarching schema—where Suzuki is Japan, Chrysler is America, and every trade victory for Japan is a defeat for America—is an embarrassing economic anachronism.

Ironically, this leads the author, like all Japan-bashers, to recommend the Japanization of America: a beefed-up trade bureaucracy, new rules to dissuade foreign investors, and more politicking by U.S. business. It seems not to have occurred to Choate that the hucksterism he deplores was spawned in the first place by a grotesquely swollen federal government. □

NOW YOU KNOW

Kitty Dukakis with Jane Scovell/Simon and Schuster/315 pp. $19.95

Joe Queenan

I have a disease. It is a disease I have never before discussed in public, a disease I am mortified to identify, yet a disease that plagues me every waking hour of my life. It is a disease I inherited from my Irish-American father, who inherited it from his Irish-American father, who inherited it from his 100 percent Irish father. It is a disease that afflicts a shocking number of Irish-American writers, a disease that ruins our marriages, turns our children against us, and strangles the budding flower of our talents. It is a disease that can only be conquered when the victim has the courage to admit that he is powerless to combat it. I am just such a person. I am a man who can no longer help himself.

I am a meanaholic.

Yes, I am an individual who can only derive joy from being mean to other people. Even as a child I would sneak off to a corner to write mean stories about good people, accusing them of being shills, phonies, morons, and whores. As I grew older, my addiction grew worse, manifesting itself in scathing movie reviews, vicious biographical profiles, and savage articles about captains of industry, titans of culture, paragons of virtue, and people like Susan Sarandon.

Like most addicts, I have spent years and years denying my disease. "Sleazeball is not an offensive term," I would tell venture capitalists angry at my use of that word to describe them. "Moron is a term of endearment," I would assure infuriated novelists whose books I had panned. "The reference to your mother was a gag," I would tell other victims of my malevolence. Yet as the years drifted by and the vicious articles grew more virulent, even I was forced to come to terms with my addiction. Nothing—wife, children, friends, expense-account lunches at Le Cirque—meant anything to me anymore. I lived and breathed for one thing alone: to be mean.

I hit the proverbial bottom last summer when I wrote a mean article filled with mean remarks about my wife, a co-dependent victim who has become the enabler of my meanness by saying things like "Joe isn't really a mean person; it's just that he grew up in Philadelphia." Desperate, seriously contemplating taking my own life, I checked into the Robert Fulghum Detoxification Center in Shady Grove, Maryland. There I entered an intensive-therapy program where I learned to come to terms with my addiction. After six weeks I began to notice a decisive change in my personality. I wrote a nice article about the actor Mandy Patinkin for a movie magazine. I said nice things about deposed Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry in a book review for this magazine. I said even nicer things about a bunch of *New York Times* reporters in a book review in the *Wall Street Journal*. I felt transformed. I felt uplifted. I felt cured.

Then Kitty Dukakis's autobiography arrived in the mail.

It all fell apart right then and there. Not three pages into *Now You Know*, I realized that I was heading straight for Relapse City. Sure, I could have dwelled on Kitty's four miscarriages, her civic activism, her work in getting trees planted, her neck problems, her love of her children. That's the sort of thing a nice person would have done. But for a meanaholic, niceness is something he has to work at twenty-four hours a day. And Kitty Dukakis's book left me twenty-five hours on the debit side.

I blame *The American Spectator* for a lot of this. Knowing of my disease, yet insisting that I review *Now You Know* was like inviting Dean Martin over for 400 margaritas. My disease swept over me, and in twenty minutes I was right back where I'd started, being mean, mean, mean. A nice person, a truly recovering meanaholic, would have glossed over Kitty's brain-dead comment about the imprisoned Nazi Rudolf Hess: "It's hard to sympathize with murderers, no matter what their age." Not me. Not Mr. Meanaholic. A nice person wouldn't have cited Kitty's idiotic remark: "The business of running for the presidency—and it *is* a business—is a serious matter and shouldn't be treated with a devil-may-care attitude." A nice person wouldn't have made fun of Kitty for fuming over Jesse Jackson's refusal to eat her fish teriyaki and instead ordering take-out chicken. And a nice person wouldn't cackle and guffaw at her description of Jackson as "lactose intolerant." But I am not a nice person. I am a meanaholic. I am niceness-intolerant.

It's my disease, you see. When Kitty glosses over the incident with the rubbing alcohol, I want to know details: brand name, label configuration, would she consider doing endorsements? When Kitty says, "Going south called for lightweight garments, while heavier clothes were needed for northern climes," the disease in me cries out, "I paid $19.95 for this?" When Kitty moans about suspicious hairdressers infiltrating Miami beauty salons, perhaps for the sinister purpose of undermining the already reeling Dukakis campaign, I start to gag. But it isn't me doing this. It's my disease.

I don't want to go on this way. I don't want to spend the rest of my life making fun of people like Kitty Dukakis just because they think the nice thing about being wife of the governor of Massachusetts is getting good parking spaces. I don't want to find myself at age seventy still pointing out that the photo on the cover of *Now You Know* makes Kitty look beautiful, while the one on the back flap of the dust jacket makes her look like a woman who should choose a better brand of rubbing alcohol. That's why this sentence—snidely observing that her co-author Jane Scovell's previous ghostings involved women who need to go on a diet (Marilyn Horne and Liz Taylor), while *Now You Know* involves a woman addicted to diet pills—is going to be the last nasty remark I ever make in my life. You see, I'm not a sick person getting sicker. I'm a sick person getting nicer. □

Joe Queenan is a frequent contributor to Barron's *and other publications.*

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WHAT ARE PEOPLE FOR?

Wendell Berry/North Point Press/192 pp. $19.95; $9.95 paper

D. G. Myers

Some years ago Wendell Berry quit his teaching job at the University of Kentucky to take up farming in Port Royal, about midway between Louisville and Cincinnati. There he has written energetically, publishing many volumes of fiction, poetry, and essays. Everything he has written has been from a rural and agrarian point of view, although he has not sought such a limited audience. "Some urban people are becoming disturbed about the contamination of air, water, and food," he writes in his most recent book, "and that is promising, but there are not enough of them yet to make a difference."

What Are People For?, Berry's seventh collection of essays, is a good introduction to his way of thinking. After two loose gatherings of aphorisms labeled "Damage" and "Healing" ("To lose the scar of knowledge is to renew the wound," "The possible, fulfilled, is timely in the world, eternal in the mind"), Berry turns his hand to literary subjects: six essays in praise of men and books, then two general statements of the writer's relationship to the community and of his responsibility. Finally, in the longest section, Berry begins to write polemically, in twelve essays that determine the book's claim on our attention. Berry emerges as an eloquent spokesman for rural and agrarian concerns.

Berry is unlikely to find this description entirely to his liking. In his essay on the oral biography of the black Alabama farmer Nate Shaw, he describes how he would prefer to be known: as a solitary man of principle, useless to propagandists, who writes out of experience and is never far from judgment. He sees something similar in the late Edward Abbey, who "speaks insistently as himself" and refuses "to act as a spokesman or a property of any group or movement, however righteous." This seems an odd claim to make on behalf of Abbey, the very title of whose novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang* has given Earth First! one of its most tiresomely self-congratulatory slogans. But it is clearly how Berry would like to see himself. I have heard from one of his students that this was the sum of Berry's message in creative writing classes: You just tell the truth about what you know.

Yet the uncomfortable truth is that Berry writes very much as the spokesman for a movement. The interest in reading him is not that of reading the best essayists. You do not read Berry to listen to an independent mind discovering what it has to say on an unfamiliar theme, but to decipher the exact nature of the movement that he speaks for. He returns again and again to the same themes: "the rape of the earth," the need to "protect it from those who would dishonor it," "the gravity, the great danger, of the predicament we are now in," and the saving grace—the great promise—of "local culture, local responsibility." At every occasion that presents itself, Berry seizes upon these ideas and feels compelled to express them.

Berry's characteristic procedure is to start from what seems to him to be a given and then to adduce varieties of experience around it. For example, in every competition, Berry believes somewhat tautologically, there is a winner and a loser. From athletics to business, the goal is to destroy one's competitor, to remove him from the scene, to leave him with nothing; all available means may be used in pursuit of this goal. You will object that a businessman may not murder his competitor, but that it is small consolation if he may murder nature. And in some competitions, such as war, even this prohibition is lifted. It follows, then, that an economy founded on the principle of competition is, well, not a nice thing. "Every [commercial] transaction is *meant* to involve a winner and a loser," Berry says. "And for this reason the human economy is pitted without limit against nature."

Much could be said about this conclusion, but there is perhaps something to observe about the habit of the mind that reaches it. In his essays Berry does not reflect upon the basis of his opinions; he tries only to make them persuasive. "I wish to speak a word for Nature," begins an essay by Thoreau, a writer to whom Berry is often compared. But Berry speaks no such word. He never offers an argument *for* "the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field." The need to defend nature is self-evident to him. What he offers in lieu of argument is voluble elaboration of established positions. His is the performance of a spokesman.

Appearances to the contrary, though, Berry is not a spokesman for anything so limited in its aims as the environmental movement. He attacks environmentalists' search for "planetary" solutions, and demands local dedication to local problems. The movement on behalf of which Berry speaks is larger than environmentalism, and bids fair to swallow it whole. Berry's own concerns are larger and more radical. Although he has been compared to Thoreau, Berry belongs more among Ignatius Donnelly, Mary Elizabeth Lease, and W. H. "Coin" Harvey—the pamphleteers of late nineteenth-century Populism—and, in polite literature, with the panegyrists of rural midwestern life, Booth Tarkington and Ruth Suckow. He invokes resentment toward modernity on the one hand and nostalgia for community on the other. And the convergence of these two impulses explains much about Berry's group or movement.

Its roots, upon closer examination, turn out to be the articles of a resurgent populism: there is a vision of a golden age, now lost ("such local cultures and economies as we once had have been stunted or destroyed"); of natural harmonies ("The goal is a harmony between the human economy and nature that will preserve both nature and humanity"); an anti-educational and anti-intellectual bias ("public falsehoods, betrayals of trust, aggressions, injustices, and imminent catastrophes are now almost exclusively the work of the college-bred"); a dualistic conception of political conflict ("The world is now divided between those who adhere to this ancient purpose and those who by intention do not"); a view of existing social arrangements as the effort of a cabal ("The present practice of handing down from on high policies and technologies . . . 'invented' by self-styled smart people in the offices and laboratories of a centralized economy"); and the conviction that the profit motive is behind everything ("corporate interests . . . are destroying the rural home and the rural life," "an incalculable birthright sold for money").

Berry's reworked populism is a beguiling array of appeals to left and right. For conservatives, there is

D. G. Myers, assistant professor of English at Texas A&M, has written for the American Scholar *and* Commentary.

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much talk of preserving and handing on a common tradition and birthright; of the evil that is done by centralization; of limits; and of slow, small adjustments. For ex-Marxists whom the counterrevolution in Eastern Europe has left with nothing to believe in, there are pleas for cooperation, not competition; disdain for "nuclear security"; promises for the "empowerment" of work in a new economy; and the bracing reassurance that this time around things are really going to be smashed.

What this strange amalgam points to, however, is a realignment of political ideologies in this country, and perhaps around the world. With the international collapse of Marxism, this new form of radical populism, emphasizing no-growth restrictions and local autonomy, is a good bet to fill the void. Berry says as much: the emerging division, he warns, "is of far more portent for the future of the world than any of the presently recognized national or political or economic divisions."

The only question is the strength of this new populism's attachment to democracy. Although "democratic" is a word of praise for Berry, he is not to be trusted on the subject, because he is more concerned with seeking an outcome than with the civil measures necessary to attain it. At one point he calls for "places that by common agreement we [humans] do not use at all, but leave wild." It sounds so simple and beautiful. Who could possibly quarrel with such a modest demand? But consider its specific character. By "use" Berry seems to mean "exploit the resources of for untold profits"; but the simple verb "use" enables him to imply that *any* use is an exploitation; it also conceals the obvious truth that these "wild places," identified as such, set aside, and protected as a result of human decision, are "used" by man, though in another way.

And what civil prescription is implied in the phrase "by common agreement"? Universal agreement? Majority rule? A consensus of environmental spokesmen? What if a democratically elected local government chooses after deliberation to ignore Berry and, instead of leaving a place wild, votes to approve a suburban housing development? What then? We know the answer of many environmentalists: Earth-First! What is Berry's answer? His title suggests that people exist only for the sake of nature. Skeptical readers may ask, however, whether the concern for nature isn't a disguise for totalitarian populism. They may wish to obtain a copy of the book in any event, if only as a guide to the slogans they are almost certain to hear over and over for the next few years. □

THE SEARCH FOR MODERN CHINA

Jonathan Spence/W. W. Norton & Co./876 pp. $29.95

Susan Ruel

Jonathan Spence's new book brings to mind those Chinese calligraphers who use mouse whiskers to paint, on bits of ivory, poems and images so infinitesimal that they must be viewed through a magnifying glass. For Spence to have carried out the herculean labor of summarizing four centuries of Chinese history is analogous to such a painter's attempting to illustrate a broad mountain vista or a gigantic big-character poster: the disparity between method and subject could not be more vast.

In his earlier work, Spence has shown considerable literary talent and an affinity for evocative minutiae, particularly in *The Death of Woman Wang* (1978), the story of the murder of an unfaithful wife by her husband in an accident-prone corner of Shandong province in the seventeenth century. By the time woman Wang, abandoned by her lover, returns to her village to suffer a grisly fate, Spence has his readers attuned to every detail, from her bound feet to the chill of the winter of 1672. Having attained such a degree of interest, he not only gets away with, but triumphs in, his rendering of her strangulation as a poetic dream sequence. At that moment, the author soars to a level of inspiration seldom reached in non-fiction; the scene lingers indelibly in the mind of anyone who has read it.

Some of Spence's other books, such as *The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution 1895-1980*, also take a broad sweep of Chinese history as their purview, but he is at his best when he zooms in on individuals and their circumstances—as in *The Treasure Palace of Matteo Ricci* and *The Question of Hu*.

Unfortunately, Spence has no time in this new book to dwell on any one scene long enough to give it the kind of in-depth treatment at which he excels. While he once again uses details colorfully and powerfully, they seldom add up to more than a diverting mnemonic for remembering the main events between the late Ming dynasty and the present. Spence has had to blur his focus considerably in order to cover a mammoth amount of information. As it is, this 876-page book is so hefty that hoisting it up to read may yield aerobic benefits.

In his introduction, Spence promises to treat the "intellectual, economic, and emotional problems" that have hindered China in its quest for modernity. Beyond simply recounting the story of China's crippling dependence on opium provided by Western powers, he addresses the deeper issue of why so many nineteenth-century Chinese were susceptible to drug addiction in the first place, even citing an example of what sounds remarkably like an early support group for imperial scholars suffering from opium addiction. In an anecdote of a man exonerated of burying his son alive because the boy had violated filial piety by cursing him, Spence tells us more about the Qing legal system than any treatise or translation of by-laws could do. In fact, the book comes most alive in those passages when the author enters the sensibilities of individuals: for example, the Ming emperor Kangxi despairing as he casts about in vain for a suitable successor, or the emperor Qianlong and the reasons the I Ching hexagram of the "sun at midday" epitomizes his strengths and weaknesses.

Spence includes much on women, who, according to the Chinese saying, "hold up half the sky." He covers everything from female infanticide rates so high they affected sex ratios in some areas (as they still do) to the brave life and early death of female revolutionary Qiu Jin, executed for attempting to overthrow the Qing dynasty. The latter account notes that the Hakka women who participated in the Taiping rebellion were considered bizarre by China's Han majority mainly because they did not bind their feet. An anecdote about a Christian missionary who abandoned his Chinese mistress and three children when his European wife arrived speaks volumes about the mixed blessings Western missionaries bestowed on the Far East.

Spence is unusually well attuned to the lessons Chinese writers hold about the spirit of their eras, from Cao Xueqin's *Dream of the Red Chamber* and Shen Fu's *Six Records from a Floating Life* to modern-day artists such as Lao She, Ding Ling, Mao Dun, and especially Lu Xun. By culling quotations from the best of their work, Spence contributes much to an understanding of the times in which they wrote, including the bounds of censorship under which some had to operate.

Furthermore, the author's command of both the spirit and letter of Chinese history allows him to draw comparisons between past and present that most would miss. For example, Peking's prosecution of a foreign businessman who fell asleep while smoking in bed and set fire to a Shenyang hotel in the early 1980s is compared to the harsh treatment of foreign sailors implicated in the deaths of Chinese nationals during the nineteenth century, before the Treaty of Nanking.

Spence revealed at a book-warming lecture at New York's Asia Society last spring that he wrote much of this book at the Naples pizza parlor in New Haven, Connecticut, where he is George Burton Adams professor of history at Yale University. While writing a text away from one's sources may make it more readable, it leads to a tendency to paraphrase instead of quoting directly. The book teems with heretofore untranslated or unavailable historical sources, but I would like to have found even more.

Overall, *The Search for Modern China* is more expository than analytical, more episodic than interpretive. While some have argued that history itself is composed of episodes, scholars who yearn for a fresh and coherent new mode of looking at China's past may be bored by the conventionality of the overview presented here. Others may feel the author shuns controversial or idiosyncratic interpretations. Nearly every recent history of modern China has traced current conditions back to the Ming dynasty, so there is little originality in Spence's approach.

The plethora of sometimes gory but always vivid word paintings in this long scroll of a book is guaranteed to leave an impression on the student's mind and memory. The problem is that cataclysmic events, such as the Cultural Revolution, in which by some estimates twenty million Chinese perished, lose their gravity and magnitude when covered, as every event in a book this length must be, in passing. Spence's scroll just keeps unfurling, as inexorably as time itself, with a climactic final frame: the Peking massacre of 1989. From that tragedy, Spence draws one of his few sweeping conclusions, quoting journalist Liu Binyan: "There will be no modern China until people are given back their voices."

However, it is not entirely clear that

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the Chinese people have ever made their voices heard. By connecting the current leadership of the Chinese Communist party with the nation's imperial past, Spence stops short of indicting the uniquely "modern" evil of totalitarian Communism. The author told the *New York Times* that he has refrained from traveling to China recently to register his displeasure with the bloodshed in Peking last year. I only wish this book had registered a more emphatic protest, by differentiating the criminality of the CCP from the despotism of Ming and Qing emperors. □

RUDENESS AND CIVILITY: MANNERS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY URBAN AMERICA

John F. Kasson/Hill & Wang/305 pp. $22.95

Francis X. Rocca

"There are upper-class manners, and there are middle-class manners," my grandmother used to say, "and middle-class manners are much better." The middle class has more to gain, of course. Parents pay $550 a week to send their children to etiquette camp at the Breakers in Palm Beach because, as one father explained to *Insight* magazine: "I want my son to know the social graces and be able to play polo or feel at home on the tennis court. To do whatever's necessary to achieve success."

The commercialization of manners is not a yuppie innovation. As John Kasson reports, the guides to good behavior that proliferated during the nineteenth century were self-help books for the new upward mobility, premised on "the conviction that proper manners and social respectability could be purchased and learned." Prior to the industrial order, rank had not been characterized by huge distinctions in refinement. Erasmus counseled sixteenth-century gentlemen merely to "let a cough hide the sound" when they broke wind at the dinner table. But urban anonymity and fluctuations of fortune in capitalism demanded tougher standards of "bodily management" and "emotional control" by which to tell the genteel from the grubby.

Kasson reproduces two 1873 line-drawings originally intended to illustrate the difference between good table manners and bad. In the former, fashionably dressed men and women in an ornate room are brought their dinner by a servant; in the latter, people in work clothes lunge for food at an uncovered table, and there are cracks in the plaster of the wall behind them.

The intended message was that luxury was the reward of gentility, not vice versa, but that incentive, according to Kasson, was hopeless and self-punishing. The finger bowls, oyster forks, and other sacramentals in the ritual of formal dining were prohibitively expensive for a working-class family, "and such luxuries were often unpalatable and their trappings and procedures clumsy to this family compared to eating a sandwich with two hands and drinking beer from a mug or a bottle."

Similarly, the postbellum practice of silence in theaters and concert halls (which today seems like nothing but common, albeit increasingly rare, courtesy), amounted to the abrogation of "the prerogatives of the audience," particularly of the working class, to interact with the actors or musicians—more generally, to carouse. By observing the new rules, they "acceded to their own marginalization."

The obvious objection to this is to assert the prerogatives of the individual spectator, of whatever class, to see and hear the program he bought a ticket for. Etiquette in this case—as in much of the circumspection, especially between the genders, that Kasson documents—is merely respect for the classical liberal right to privacy (in its commonsensical construction, not the penumbral version of Justice Douglas).

But Kasson is not much interested in individual prerogative. For him authoritarian injunctions against foot-tapping and whistling during a concert or play led to "commodification": the packaging of a performance as a standardized, salable entity independent of a particular audience, which turned every listener into a passive consumer, isolated from his neighbors.

This "segmentation" is Kasson's biggest theme, and he finds it epitomized in the transformation of the formal dinner party. During the Colonial era, a banquet table was set before hand with the entire repast, the host himself did the carving, and guests served themselves from the dishes. By the Gilded Age, each guest was served his meal in a strict progression of courses (suggestive of social hierarchy), kept away from the common vessels, and ate from his own elaborate place setting (identified with private property). All the while, he regulated his chewing and his chatter in order to forestall any physical or emotional intimacy with his partners. These precautions had momentous political implications:

> Advocates of civility and refinement may well have sensed that the act of sharing a meal might subvert that segmentation, in favor, not of barbarism, but of some radical sort of leveling. Potentially, dining might usher in a new kind of fellowship: a melting of individual reserve and a breakdown of social norms into a changed collectivity.

Here, Kasson is mildly paranoid. Elsewhere, his antipathy to capitalism leads him to cynical misinterpretation. "I well remember the horror excited by any irregularity in affairs," recalled Edith Wharton, "and the relentless social ostracism inflicted on the families of those who lapsed from professional and business integrity." Kasson concludes: "While the bourgeois code of manners might mediate in some respects the fluctuations of the marketplace, ultimately it was tied to them."

For the professor, Wharton's integrity is a "principle of fidelity-to-contract, fundamental to business transactions." Kasson recognizes no ultimate difference between probity and profitability. But, according to Louis Auchincloss, later denizens of Wharton's milieu shunned Jay Gould's grandchildren for their patriarch's notorious success. If that was self-interest, it was self-interest so enlightened and so stubbornly pursued as to be positively transcendent.

To disqualify Victorian propriety as a tribute to human dignity as such, Kasson performs a *reductio ad absurdum*: a Last Supper conducted by standards of etiquette circa A.D. 1880. Crucifixion, betrayal, body, and blood would be inappropriate table talk, of course, and for the host to wash his guests' feet would be most unseemly:

> . . . it is ludicrous to imagine Jesus and his apostles donning formal dress and participating in the ceremonies of private ownership and display . . . In addition, the Victorian emphasis on prescribed social forms and procedures would have amounted to pharisaism, a strict insistence upon the letter of social ritual in such a way as to kill the spirit.

Now, the circumstances of this meal were, to say the least, extraordinary by the standards of any age; it would be a presumptuous host who took it as the

Francis X. Rocca is a writer living in New Haven, Connecticut.

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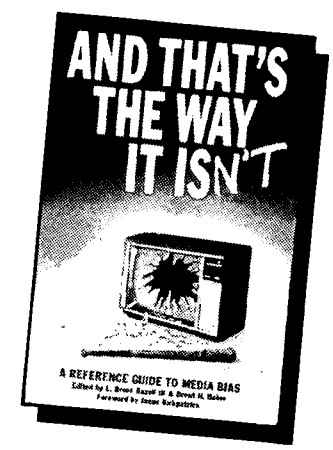

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model dinner party. It certainly did not accomplish the "radical sort of leveling" Kasson idealizes; the literal condescension of foot-washing, the commanding way in which Jesus conducted the event, and the very exclusivity in gathering the most important disciples, are affirmations of a hierarchy. The question of whether or not a life of poverty is the truest way to imitate Christ and the apostles is the subject of longstanding theological dispute, far out of Kasson's ken. Incidentally, it seems likely that pious Jews, however poor, would have donned the best clothes they had for Seder, though if Kasson takes "formal dress" to mean white tie, we must grant him the point.

Kasson's reference to rabbinical Judaism ("pharisaism") suggests an inspiring, if profane, analogy. The strictures in the Talmud that govern everyday gestures are, like century-old customs of polite usage, routinely dismissed as irrelevant to modern life. But, as the observant know, the manner in which a wife greets her husband or in which a householder may hand alms to a beggar on the Sabbath is fraught with spiritual significance in every detail. Attention to minutiae becomes a form of continuous prayerful reflection.

Did the obsolete courtesies of vanished ladies and gentlemen also have morally didactic value? Furthermore, if Orthodox observance consecrates the casual, did Victorian manners estheticize it? In his gloss on instructions for "the lost art of hat-tipping," Kasson himself shows that it was so.

> During this procedure the man's most expressive features—his eyes, mouth, and hands—required precise governance. He exerted this ceremonious control on behalf of all women of his acquaintance (if they acknowledged him), no matter whether they were social antagonists, at one extreme, or intimate relatives, at the other. He honored each as a woman without making his expression of honor in public specific to her as an individual. He paid attentive deference without subjecting her to pointed scrutiny. He aimed to make all his gestures consistent, fluid, intelligible, and easily read without being eccentrically conspicuous. Throughout, he testified to his own self-control and ritual competence.

It is a pity that Kasson, who evokes the richness of formality so well in that case, is generally insensitive to the complexities and nuances in his subject. A casual error gives a clue to the fundamental flaw in his approach. When manners become a matter of habit, Kasson says, they appear to be natural behavior:

> It becomes easy for the socially privileged to regard their class position and prestige as the *product* of their natural attributes, including their superior "taste" and "breeding," rather than the *cause*, and for those lower on the social scale to accept their domination, and to see the rich (in Scott Fitzgerald's famous phrase) as "different from you and me," set apart from nature rather than class and culture.

But in the remark's original context, it is clear that Fitzgerald means that the rich are different because of upbringing, and largely by virtue of the conceit of their superiority. In fact, the words occur in a story about a rich young man who flouts the rules of etiquette. Kasson has apparently not read the story: the quote—a fragment of the single best known line by one of this country's greatest writers—is footnoted to a 1984 book by a French critic. It is not captious to cite an American history professor for such an oversight, but it would be impolite to single out Kasson. He is only an individual in a culture of academicians increasingly preoccupied with current theory and sadly remote from the original sources of their knowledge. □

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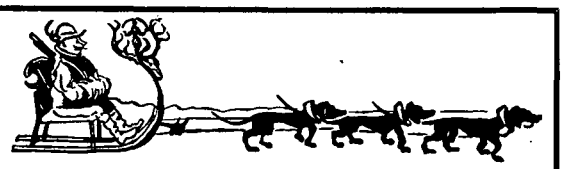

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BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS
(continued from page 29)

TOM WOLFE

Liar's Poker by Michael Lewis captures the psychology of the money fever of the 1980s beautifully. *The Party and Other Stories* and *The Duel and Other Stories* by Anton Chekhov: No one who reads these two books can doubt that, in fiction, realism is the wave of the future for this *fin de siecle* as well as for the last. *The Wanderers* by Richard Price is one of the best coming-of-age novels ever written by an American.

Tom Wolfe is the author of The Right Stuff, From Bauhaus to Our House, *and* The Bonfire of the Vanities.

EDITORIALS
(continued from page 13)

fine, intelligent prose. He has organized defenders of traditional American values, served as the Republic's premier debater, adopted to change while endeavoring to shape it, attempted to delay the deterioration of American education, and, incidentally, had a ball. He is not one of the diffident, bookish fellows that some intellectuals are. Rather Bill is a grand public figure, whose fame has been such that in the early 1970s some thought of him as the conservatives' presidential candidate. Eventually his friend and co-conspirator Ronald Reagan became President and, by artfully employing the ideas and personnel of the movement Bill had shaped, ended the Cold War and encouraged an enormous growth and prosperity.

Yet today this movement seems headed for a crack-up. There is bickering and exhaustion from the demands of the Reagan years. Moreover, conservatives do not seem to be able to get across to political leaders that Bill Buckley's ideas won the hearts of the American people along with peace and prosperity. The other night when emotion seized Bill, was he thinking of President Bush's apparent surrender to the politics of 1979? Does Bill fear his movement failed? Well, the Chairman of the Board has been an exemplary leader. He need not fear for the expiry of his values. He taught us all well. □

CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 11)

pauperism as have resulted from the present United States welfare system are described. This is *not* a racist issue, rather one of human nature, i.e., economically and biologically motivated persons responding to perverse incentives. For instance, the presence of a male head-of-household disqualifies the beneficiary. In the absence of consistent paternal influence, the young males are not subject to traditional civilizing and educational constraints. As a result, the larger society lives in fear within its homes and public places. Obviously this social monster must be stopped cold, and reasonable alternatives instituted.

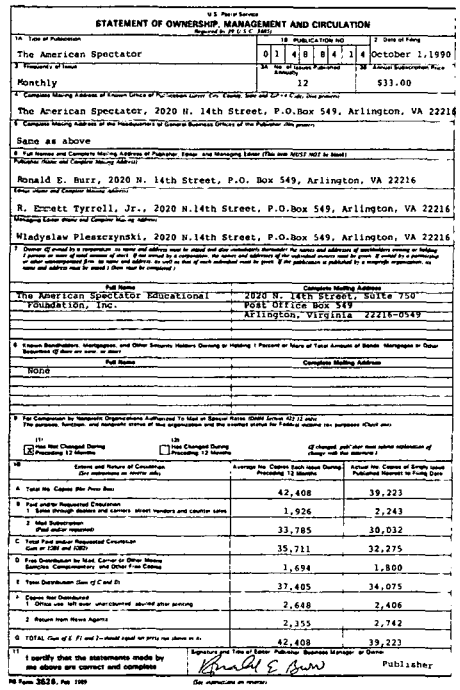
Second is the issue of affirmative action and its variations. Witness India today in mass revolt against a preferential policy for civil service jobs. Please read Thomas Sowell's "Affirmative Action: A Worldwide Disaster," in *Commentary*, December 1989, for an eloquent and reasoned analysis of the corrosive effects of preferential policies based on racial, religious, or ethnic subsets of the population.

Do not let us allow demagogic politicians, ever out to create personal constituencies, often ethnic or racial, to cause social havoc. But recognize these evils as important to all residents of our country—and fight to contain, change, and improve upon them.

—G. Canfield
Miami, Florida

Democracy and Its Apologists

Michael Ledeen presents us with an article on "The Second Democratic Revolution" (*TAS*, October 1990) which will finish, he says, what a first democratic revolution began. One might feel more confidence in his prescriptions for the



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present if they rested on a firmer grasp of the past.

According to Mr. Ledeen: "We have entered the Age of the Second Democratic Revolution. Just as *the last quarter of the eighteenth century saw democracy sweep across Western Europe*, laying waste to monarchies, duchies, and principalities, so today anti-democratic regimes are falling in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa" (emphasis added).

But is it really the case that "the last quarter of the eighteenth century saw democracy sweep across Western Europe?" The year 1800 came and went without a single functioning democracy in Europe. The only thing resembling a democracy in Europe around this time was the Swiss confederation, which had existed since the Middle Ages. The rest of Europe remained solidly monarchic, aristocratic, and theocratic.

The French, of course, had a revolution in 1789. However, this revolution did not establish a democracy but a constitutional monarchy. The new regime rapidly degenerated into a totalitarian dictatorship that slaughtered hundreds of thousands of its citizens, foreshadowing the genocidal regimes of the twentieth century. This dictatorship was subsequently replaced by the milder despotism of the Emperor Napoleon, who went on to conquer most of Europe by force of arms, installing members of his own family as petty kings in Italy and elsewhere. It was not "democracy" that swept Western Europe but Napoleon's imperial armies. In France itself, democracy did not catch on until the last quarter of the *nineteenth* century. Even England only adopted universal manhood suffrage at that time.

Perhaps all this will cause Mr. Ledeen to reconsider his unbounded enthusiasm for Thomas Paine, whose Walter Duranty-style apologetics for the French Revolution make him the forerunner of the modern apologists for totalitarianism whom Mr. Ledeen so rightly critiques.

—Nicholas Davidson
New York, New York

Michael Ledeen replies:
I don't like the terror either (and anyone who has read my books on fascism knows that), but to deny that there was a democratic revolution in the eighteenth century verges on dementia. To take last things first, old Tom Paine wasn't quite the reliable agent of influence you might imagine, and in 1802 he wrote back home from Europe as follows:

> I know of no Republic in the world, except America, which is the only country for such men as you and I. . . . I have done with Europe and its slavish politics.

Ever the man of total commitment, Paine was as disappointed as our correspondent with the corruption and fragility of the democratic wave. Nonetheless, readers interested in deepening their understanding of the first revolutionary moment in Western history might take a look at that old masterpiece, R. R. Palmer's *The Age of the Democratic Revolution*, which modestly concludes:

> These events [can be seen] as a single movement, revolutionary in character, for which the word "democratic" is appropriate and enlightening; a movement which, however different in different countries, was everywhere aimed against closed elites, self-selecting power groups, hereditary castes, and forms of special advantage or discrimination that no longer served any useful purpose. These were summed up in such terms as feudalism, aristocracy, and privilege, against which the idea of common citizenship in a more centralized state, or of common membership in a free political nation, was offered as a more satisfactory basis for the human community.
>
> What had happened by 1800, even in countries where it was temporarily suppressed, was the assertion of "equality" as a prime social desideratum . . .

Let me say, however, that I'm encouraged to see that historical debates are still objects of passion in this country. It speaks well of the *Spectator* and its readers. I only hope that the current generation of students will be able to overcome the ignorance and ideology of its mentors to keep the curiosity and balance necessary for understanding.

Colman's Cool
I always enjoy TAS because it's so refreshing to read a political magazine that is informative and yet also humorous. But I was quite disappointed to read your unjust insinuations against Professor Colman McCarthy on your "Current Wisdom" page (October 1990). The writer snidely implied that Colman McCarthy had written a piece under the influence of "a few drinks . . . some of those little pink pills . . . and a sprig or two of marijuana." While some people might call Colman McCarthy eccentric, nobody could call him a drug or alcohol user. It very simply has never been the case.

Although my political views are much more conservative than Mr. McCarthy's, I still am a friend of his family and I don't appreciate his good character being maligned.

While I'll probably continue to read your magazine, there will always be a part of me that will wonder if what I am reading from your pages is the truth or actually just biased conjecture. My opinion of you as great journalists has taken a few steps down.

—Ellen M. Willson
Washington, D.C.

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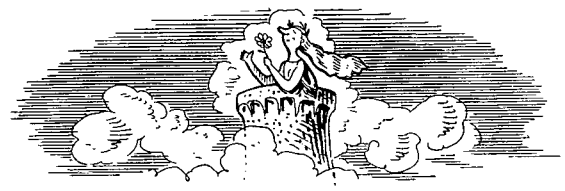

LAND OF THE SMILING SUN

by Richard Brookhiser

The last time I was in California, apart from a few political trips, I was a five-year-old taken there by my parents on a cross-country drive in a black Comet. I was impressed by the crookedest street in the world in San Francisco, and the biggest tree on earth in Sequoia Park, but anthropology was beyond my ken. Thirty years later, I revisited the street and the tree. But I was also able to notice Californians.

There is something impertinent about a New Yorker holding forth on the citizens of the opposite coast. Since, according to the 1990 census, one in eight Americans is a Californian, they have more right to hold forth on us, or anyone else in the country. But we buy their movies, their records, their fruit, and their fads. They can stand a little back-talk.

Back-talk, in fact, is one thing they don't produce locally. The first thing an outsider notices, even before he arrives, is how agreeable Californians in service positions are. "Have a nice day" isn't a tag line, it's a credo. The nastiest remark I heard in the whole state was a cabbie complaining that Chinese don't drive confidently because "they're into Tai Chi and flow."

When Californians are being disagreeable, they treat you with what the shrinks call "passive" aggression. Disagreeable New Yorkers believe in *aggressive* aggression—the traditional kind. But make some demand a Californian is unprepared or unwilling to meet—such as, my charming room at your charming inn isn't charming enough, can I change it?—and he will rest serenely in his space and watch yours implode.

But the great fact that shrinks all human phenomena, peaceful and abrasive, is nature. Here, nature is simply and unignorably present in a way that nothing human is, despite large numbers of human beings. The age differential between human and non-human is greater in California than in the east. Victorian qualifies as old there, while something like Fort Ross, a Russian stockade on the Sonoma coast built in the 1820s, is prehistoric. In the natural world, by contrast, you can, without even seeking out the bristle-cone pines, find trees that were alive when Jesus was. (According to some eschatologists, they will still be alive when Jesus comes back.) Californian nature is also larger-scale than the eastern variety. It impinges even in cities, as anyone who has made the mistake of walking up Nob Hill knows. By contrast, in a few years the tallest non-building in New York is going to be a heap of garbage on Staten Island.

Even when nature isn't scenic, there is something impressive about it. The Central Valley, as we drove across it, was as flat as a floor and hot as blazes. But I knew, as the farms slid past, where all my vegetables were coming from this winter.

I soaked more than I ever had in my life. In ten days I sat in three hot tubs, one mudbath, and one clothing-optional Japanese steam room built over a natural hot spring. The last was on the grounds of a Zen monastery, an hour and a half, by four-wheel-drive van, from the nearest paved road. All we had for company during the day were squabbling black- and bluejays, and during the night, stars as big as ice cubes. Most of my fellow bathers were not disciples of Alan Watts but normal business people looking for a place to relax. They came to the right place. I only got one massage, but that was not for lack of opportunity. Our inn in Big Sur gave each guest a list, two sides of a page, of the masseurs and masseuses who were on call, with brief bios, like a massage edition of *Playbill*: "Tringanath specializes in deep tissue work, and relaxation of stress patterns."

Is it too beautiful for everyone's good? When the light flutters on the eucalyptus leaves; when the fruit trucks stream through the mountain passes like commuters onto the Long Island Expressway; when one mild perfect day gives way to the next, after succeeding the day before—you can start thinking of Toynbee and the doctrine of challenge and response. Seventeenth-century New England was freezing, and Virginia had amoebic dysentery. But if the Puritans and the Cavaliers had landed at Monterey instead, would the colonies have prospered?

In such lush soil, gaudy blossoms flourish. Everyone knows that Californians dabble in peculiar beliefs, but it is still surprising to see them close up. When we were in San Francisco, the papers were running stories about two Bay Area Pentecostals who called for "militant power-praying" to combat the spirit of the New Age which, they said, held the northern part of the state in thrall. I could see what they meant. In California, the New Age is not just a generator of dumb and boneless music. It is a faith, like Catholicism or psychoanalysis. Its books and paraphernalia are everywhere. There were crystals for sale in hotel bookstores, pyramids in shopping centers.

Californians are supposed to fall for this kind of thing because of their openness to new ideas. But their new ideas are actually old ideas, that have rolled across the continent and gotten paint jobs. New Age crapola is theosophy, and spiritualism, and New England's fascination with the mystic East. Today's environmentalism, like Big Green, and yesterday's, like Robinson Jeffers, are slow letters from Thoreau. One of the few movements in which California has truly been at the forefront is the Protestant reaction, since Los Angeles was a bastion of turn-of-the-century Pentecostalism and Fundamentalism. But California was hardly alone in that crusade. Jeffers, from his perch on the coast, said of the Pacific Ocean, which he called "the staring unsleeping Eye of the earth," that "what it watches is not our wars." It also doesn't watch our thoughts, and Californians don't pay much attention to them either, which is why they're so willing to pick them up secondhand.

What look like conflicts of ideas turn out to be conflicts of hedonisms instead. Rights become pleasures, and the only restriction Californians recognize on pleasure is the overriding claim of a greater one. Since good health is the condition of all pleasures, they have made it as hard to smoke a cigarette in the state as on a domestic plane flight. The latest news from Los Angeles is that the courts must now adjudicate between the rights of club-goers to go to clubs which only admit cool people, and the right of a nerd, who tried to enter but was turned back, not to feel hurt. The one political slogan I saw all the time I was there was on a T-shirt: SEX IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN NUCLEAR POWER. The implied position is one I happen to endorse, but it struck me as a particularly Californian way of framing the issue.

I don't want to suggest that intellectual life in the rest of the country is problem-free. The noise and futility of New York arguments—Is Karen Finley as great as Salman Rushdie? Is Pat Buchanan as evil as Heidegger?—can be like pressing a clawhammer to a grindstone. Washington is, if possible, worse, because arguments there, though equally raucous and endless, are only about one thing, politics. And I haven't been back to a college except for football games or reunions since I handed in my room key and my laundry. If this is the life of the mind, lobotomy has to be a serious option.

I must also admit that if I lived in any place that was so smiling, I would probably become a Californian myself. And I didn't even get to Eureka, Tahoe, Yosemite, the beach. If I ever move there, I must remember to program regular vacations to the Times Square subway station. In rush hour. □

Richard Brookhiser is a senior editor of National Review *and a columnist for the* New York Observer.

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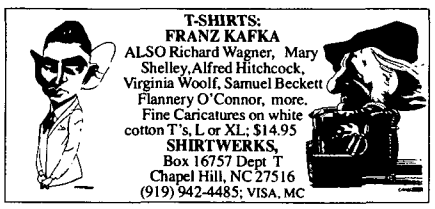
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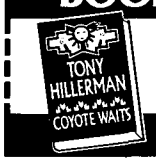

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Another example of the ghastly prose and fractious thought that one has to endure to be a faithful leftist:

And there *was* salvation there, in the New World, though it was not a kind the Europeans then understood. They thought first that exploitation was salvation, and they went at that with a vengeance, and found new foods and medicines and treasures, but that proved not to be; that colonization and settlement was salvation, and they peopled both continents with conquerors, and it was not that either; that progress and power and technics wrested from the new lands was salvation, and they made mighty nations and towering cities in its service, but it was not even that.

The salvation there, had the Europeans known where and how to look for it, was obviously in the integrative tribal ways, the nurturant communitarian values, the rich interplay with nature that made up the Indian cultures—as it made up, for that matter, the cultures of the ancient peoples everywhere, not excluding Europe. It was there especially in the Indian consciousness, in what Calvin Martin has termed "*the biological outlook on life,*" in which patterns and concepts and the large teleological constructs of culture are not human-centered but come from the sense of being at one with nature, biocentric, ecocentric, and where there was myth but no history, circular rather than linear time, renewal and restoration but not progress, imaginative apperception far more subtle than science, understanding without words or even ideation, sacred rather than material interpretation of things, and an interpenetration into earth and its life-forms that superceded [sic] an identification with self or species.

[from: The Conquest of Paradise: Christopher Columbus and the Columbian Legacy, *by Kirkpatrick Sale. Alfred A. Knopf, $24.95]*

New York Times

Mr. Fox Butterfield of the celebrated *Times* of New York conducts an interview with the lunatic fringe:

But Mr. Dukakis retains an uncanny equilibrium, a detachment, even a sense of optimism, that friends praise as strength and critics deride as lack of feeling. In an interview in his office in the gold-domed Statehouse on Beacon Hill, Mr. Dukakis said he does not feel personally rejected by the people of Massachusetts.

"People are angry generally across the country," he said, wearing a familiar button-down shirt, his hair a little grayer than during the Presidential campaign.

"He acknowledged that voters in Massachusetts are particularly bitter. "What happened here was, we were on a tremendous high," he said. "The Governor of the state was running for President. Everybody knew I was a long shot, including yours truly, and lo and behold, it gets better and better, and suddenly he's won the nomination. It's Camelot all over again."

[October 17, 1990]

Washington Post

Mr. Melor Sturua, a "political columnist" for *Izvestia* now a fellow at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, demonstrates that even a lifelong Communist can write ad copy for Yankee soap operas:

And so the Nobel Prize committee continues its vendetta against Soviet Communism. After Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov and Brodsky, another Soviet dissident has been awarded the Nobel Prize. This time for peace.

As before, the choice was precise and to the point. More than that, it was the best choice imaginable because the new laureate has contributed more to dismantling the Soviet Communist Empire than all of his four predecessors combined or any other person in the world for that matter.

The name of this no. 1 Soviet dissident is Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the President of the U.S.S.R. He is the first card-carrying Communist to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, and I highly suspect he will be the last.

The Nobel Prize awarded to Gorbachev dramatically underscores the tragic dilemma that haunts him. He is a historic figure—one of Shakespearean dimensions.

[October 19, 1990]

Los Angeles Times

An exigent report on the higher intellections of Sonia Johnson, excommunicated Mormon and former presidential candidate on the Citizens Party ticket now living in an "experimental community" with a handful of women near Albuquerque, New Mexico:

Johnson envisions other communities based on the same philosophy. Hers would focus on gay women because that's where her interests lie, but she sees other mini-environments made up of heterosexuals or of gay men.

Her theory leaves room for jobs no one would want to do. How many people, for instance, really want to clean toilets?

Suppose, Johnson said, that each woman in the community checks out her feelings and finds that, nope, cleaning toilets doesn't fit in. "But, because these women believe that their desires are perfect guides to behavior, none of them says 'It's got to be done,' " she wrote last spring in *Women of Power* magazine. "Trusting their feelings and knowing that they spring directly from their values, they realize that since none of them wants to clean it, something is wrong with the toilet, not with them."

For one thing, toilets are too high for most women, Johnson said, and they waste countless gallons of water. A toilet also takes "marvelous, scientifically unreproducible organic matter . . . and carts it off," she said.

The women thus could decide to replace the conventional toilet with custom-made composting toilets, she says.

[September 30, 1990]

Germantown Gazette
(Germantown, Maryland)

A concerned reader points out the need for more surface-to-air missiles in historic Germantown:

As a resident of Clarksburg (specifically, Clarksbrook Estates), I would like to alert readers to a concern I have. Over the past year, I've noticed eagles overhead (I believe they are golden eagles, but I am not certain). These are large birds—one flew low, within twenty feet of me, about a week ago, and had a wingspan of about five feet. I've also observed a concomitant increase in the number of rabbits in the yard, and for the first time I'm aware of, squirrels.

My concern is for small pets, i.e., small cats or dogs, that could be about the same size and weight as a rabbit. Might an eagle prey upon someone's small pet? Should residents begin keeping small pets indoors, in light of the potential risk?

I am not a veterinarian, but perhaps readers should consult their veterinarians as to whether it is still prudent to allow small pets outdoors.

I don't want to convey the impression I have any animosity toward eagles; on the contrary, I love watching them soar and glide along. They're quite graceful, beautiful and wild. I'm just concerned about neighbors who have small cats and dogs that might be at risk for harm.

—Helen M. Ford
Clarksburg

[July 25, 1990]

Santa Barbara News-Press

Ruminations of a potential mass killer at large in Santa Barbara:

First, I double dare you to print this. My whole family bets you won't.

Every month I get a phone call from your paper asking me to subscribe, telling me of the greatness of your publication. I always reply that I won't subscribe because your paper is biased and capitalist. That usually stops them in their tracks.

Today's (Aug. 18) paper proves my point. My family sat around the breakfast table and groaned and booed while I read outloud your front-page article on the opening of Nordstrom. We all agree that you did not put this article on the front page, or in the paper at all, because of the enormous amount of money the mall is pumping into your paper with their endless full page ads!

The quote saying the reception from the community is outstanding is erroneous. Nine out of ten people that I speak with about the mall think it is obscene, too big, too gaudy, too much, no matter how you look at it.

I thought that the purpose of our lives here on Earth was to become more spiritually evolved. This mall pays homage to man's greed and selfishness. When so many have so little . . . well, you know the rest.

[August 21, 1990]

Washington Post

Miss Christine Brennan emerges from the men's locker room, where she has braved the hairy armpits, the gigantic arses, the almost unbelievable groins, the stench of sweat and worse, to report the sporting news to a grateful nation, and, *mirabile dictu*, confronts the last Victorian gal:

The question came from one of the dozens of television reporters who had questions to ask this week.

"Why do women have to go into the locker room?"

I had heard it so many times before that I wanted to roll my eyes, say something about it being 1990 and turn the conversation to the substantive issues of the sad, disgusting story of the New England Patriots and sportswriter Lisa Olson.

But this reporter was serious. I don't think she knew the answer. So I told her.

"We go into the locker rooms not because we want to, but because we have to. . . . "

[September 30, 1990]

Baltimore Messenger

The Marcel Proust of Baltimore turns his attentions to geopolitics:

An open letter to Presidents Bush and Saddam Hussein: Gentlemen, I was passing time last night trying to balance my monthly bank statement and, at the same time, listening to the radio for the latest round of madness from the Middle East. Without notice, a tiny black spider came marching across my desk in a right-to-left direction within six inches of my right hand.

At that instant, he was in mortal danger because my usual response to intruding insects is to squash and dispose with great dispatch.

I did not kill him . . . Instead of violence, I used the point of my pencil to maneuver my uninvited guest onto a piece of tissue paper, whereupon I trapped him by quickly folding up the corners. He was now my prisoner and all of my options were still open.

I was free to continue this experiment in compassion or I could grow impatient and crush my captive at will. A life hung in the balance and I was God!

I chose the former course and immediately sensed that I was on the right track. This was beginning to feel good. What next? I carried the hostage-laden pouch outside to the back porch and flung the whole thing down onto the lawn several feet below. And just like that, my job was done. . . . A life was saved and it made me very happy. What a lucky spider!

Judging from the way this experience made me feel, I know I made the right decision. I can't help but wonder if, when all the saber-rattling in the desert is over, will you be able to say the same?

—Jack Hermann
Cedarcroft

[August 29, 1990]

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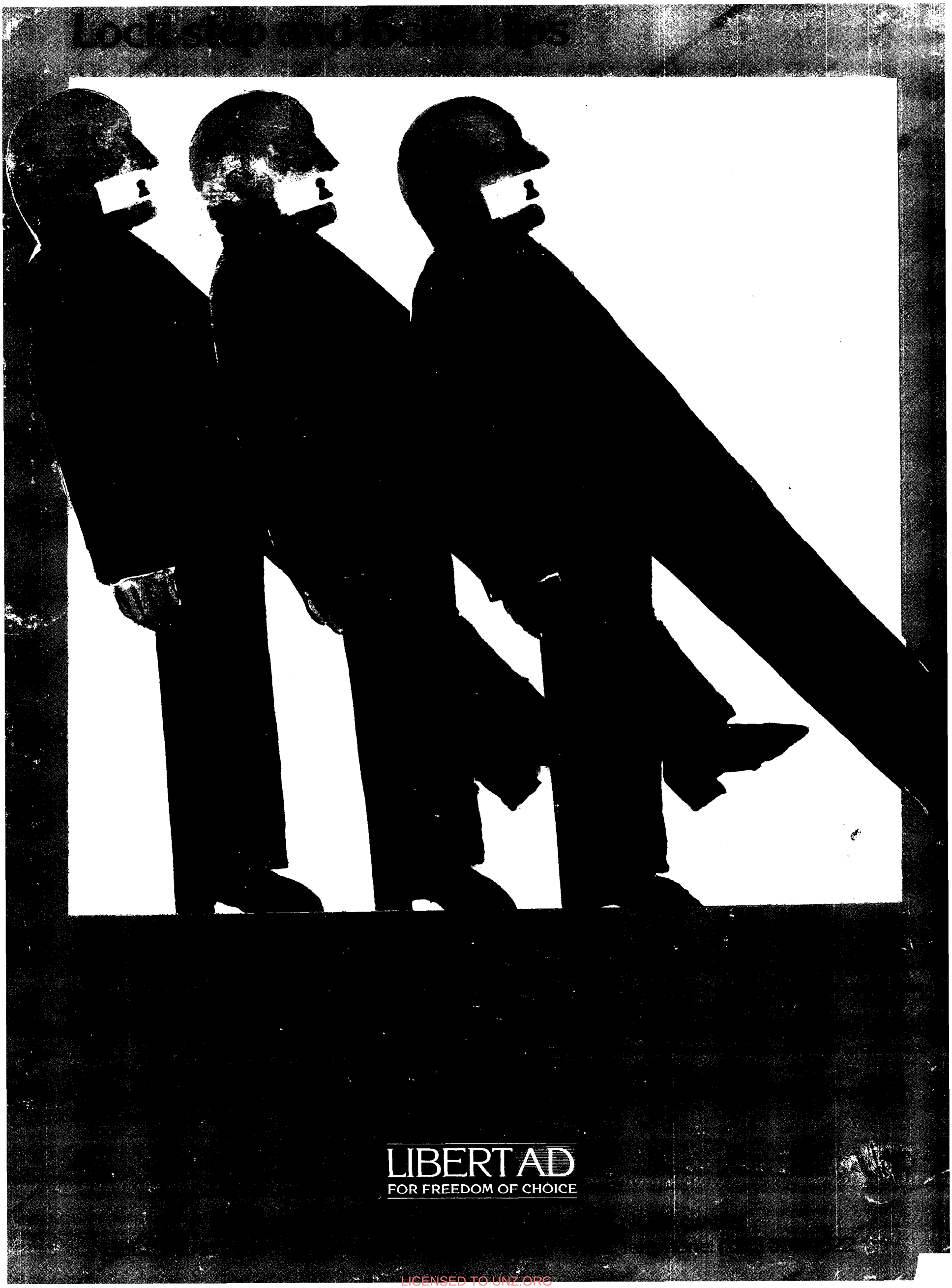

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